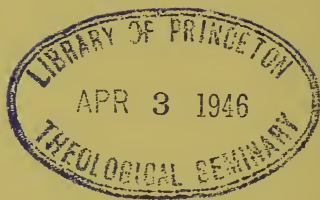


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FOR WHOM IS CHRISTIAN BAPTISM DESIGNED?

A

NEW DISSERTATION

ON

AN OLD CONTROVERSY,

WITH AN ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE REASONING CONTAINED

IN

DR HALLEY'S SEVENTH LECTURE

ON

THE SACRAMENTS;

TO WHICH IS ADDED A BRIEF INQUIRY INTO THE MODE OF ADMINISTERING
THE ORDINANCE.

BY

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M.DCCC.XLVIII.



ADVERTISEMENT.

ALTHOUGH circumstances, altogether unavoidable, have hitherto retarded the publication of this little volume, and several works have successively appeared on the subject, the author still feels induced to offer it to the public. It was just about to be put into the printer's hands when Dr Halley's "Reply" to Mr Stovel and Dr Wardlaw was announced as being in the press. As, however, that work does not appear to occupy any new ground, and the learned writer continually appeals to his former arguments, which he considers as still remaining unanswered, the author of this dissertation feels himself justified in sending his work *unaltered* to the press. In doing so he derives much satisfaction and encouragement from the fact, that Dr Halley has *so* explained some of the opinions expressed in his former work, as not only to approach nearer to the views herein advocated than he appeared to have done before, but even, on the whole, to corroborate them. A foot-note has been added, here and there, in those parts of the treatise where the reasoning might seem to be somewhat affected by Dr Halley's views and arguments contained in the "Reply."

May, 1848.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION	9
CHAP. I.—THE COMMISSION	14
CHAP. II.—THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES	62
CHAP. III.—THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT	111
CHAP. IV.—PARTICULAR TEXTS	148
CHAP. V.—THE MODE	165

PREFACE.

IT is now about ten years since a change took place in my views on the subject of Christian baptism, at which time I contemplated making public my reasons for renouncing the Pædo-baptist faith, and penned some of the thoughts contained in the following pages. But my design of publishing had long been overruled, and, as I thought, finally relinquished, when the appearance of Dr Halley's Lectures on Baptism gave me a new impulse to return to the subject which, formerly, had so much exercised my mind. I began writing, and soon found myself almost necessitated to mould my thoughts into the shape of an answer to Dr Halley's reasonings, which was anything but what, on resuming my manuscript, I intended. And, though I now offer this little treatise to the public, it is not without extreme reluctance that, in doing so, I place myself in the unenviable and adventurous posi-

tion of an antagonist to the author of "The Sacraments." I have, moreover, a personal feeling of delicacy in appearing in this matter, the nature of which it is quite unnecessary to explain to my readers, but which Dr Halley will understand, and for which his generosity will, I trust, give me credit. I beg to assure the Doctor that every line of this work has been written with sentiments of deep respect for him personally, and deference to his superior learning and scholarship. I feel a full confidence, I own, in the strength of the arguments I have employed; at the same time I have much pleasure in submitting them to Dr Halley's acute powers of analysis, not doubting that, if any error lurks in them, his keen perception will detect it, and that he, if any one, can convince me of the fallacy of my reasonings.

Perhaps some apology may be expected from me for writing at all on this subject, inasmuch as a formal answer to Dr Halley's Lectures was furnished soon after their publication by Mr Stovel. However, it appears to me that different minds may contribute in different ways towards the same object, and, did I not think that the views advanced in this dissertation have some advantage over any that have hitherto appeared, it would, I am aware, only be to offer a gra-

tautious insult to the public, to expect them to give any attention to another work, however small, on the baptismal controversy.

I, further, beg leave to say that this work was ready for the press ere Dr Wardlaw's "Strictures" upon Dr Halley's views (published as an Appendix to a new edition of his former work on Baptism) came under my notice. On reading those "Strictures," I was led carefully to review my own composition; and finding many similar views and arguments, I discovered very little that needed modification. With the line of reasoning that Dr Wardlaw adopts in the "Strictures," as it regards adults, I cordially agree. In the other, respecting the infant children of believers—which is argued at length in the original work, and defended in the "Strictures"—he appears to me quite at fault. But, if I do not see with Dr Wardlaw on this point, neither do I look in the same line of vision with Dr Halley. My third chapter is, therefore, at war with both these learned Doctors, and must stand or fall by its own merits.

I hope the following pages have been written throughout in the spirit of Christian love; for sure am I, it were better (on this vexed question at least) that nothing were written to instruct the mind, than

that un-christian feelings should, through the asperities of disputation, be excited in the heart.

I dedicate my work to the Baptist and Pædobaptist Churches of England and Scotland, hoping that, instead of tending to widen the breach between the denominations, it may have the happy effect of promoting mutual confidence, fellowship, and love.

THOMAS MORELL.

Danbury, February, 1847.

FOR WHOM IS CHRISTIAN BAPTISM DESIGNED?

INTRODUCTION.

ON instituting a brief inquiry into the much agitated question of baptism, it seems necessary to make a few preliminary remarks on the mode of conducting the argument. Correct principles of interpretation are of the utmost importance in all discussions upon Scripture truths; and the design of these introductory observations is to point out the respective provinces of analogy and philology, with the view, more especially, of vindicating the use of analogical reasonings, which have been objected to, in turn, by disputants on either side of the baptismal controversy. There appears to be no good reason why, in the discussion of this subject, analogy should be proscribed. If, originating merely in the caprice of imagination, it despised the high authority of

Scripture, there might be some ground to take exception against it. But when it is considered that analogical reasonings pay the very highest deference to revelation—that it is the truth of the Bible alone about which they concern themselves, and for which they contend—evidently there can be no reason for representing them as irrelevant or inapplicable. Truth must be consistent with itself; all its several parts must harmonize with each other; and it is the object of analogy to vindicate the consistency of truth, to demonstrate that there is no one part of the beautiful fabric that is ill-proportioned—nothing that mars or destroys the perfect order and unity of the whole. We readily admit that, in all cases where it is possible, philology should take the precedence, and that no plausible reasonings from analogy should be allowed to stand against the plain and unequivocal meaning of the words of Scripture, fairly interpreted by the rules of sound criticism. At the same time, it cannot be pretended that analogy is to be excluded from the province of Biblical interpretation. It is as essential in some cases as verbal criticism itself, to aid us in discovering the true sense of a passage. The results of these two different kinds of argumentation, in truth, cannot by any possibility be at variance with each other. If such could be the case, the harmony of truth would be broken.

Dr Davidson, in his “Biblical Hermeneutics,” has well explained the meaning of the phrase, “Analogy of faith,” and has made some very judicious and dis-

criminating observations on the use to be made of it in Biblical interpretation. He says: "The phrase in question means the general tenor of Scripture doctrine, or the clear and unambiguous consent of many passages brought to bear upon such as appear to be dark, difficult, or contradictory. When an interpreter carefully examines the fundamental clearly revealed doctrines of Scripture, and, with complete conviction of their truth, combines them into an harmonious system, he should not put such a construction upon a particular place as would clash with their testimony." Again he remarks: "The analogy of faith does not lead to the discovery of the meaning of a passage which is ambiguous or obscure. If we are at a loss to know the precise meaning of a passage, it will not be opened up by means of this rule. It will prevent us from imposing such a sense as would contradict other places, of whose meaning we are assured; but it cannot furnish more valuable assistance. It is negative in its operation, not positive. It constrains the expositor to adhere to the consistency of Scripture with itself, and to self-consistency of interpretation; but where a passage admits of various senses, it cannot point out the one which is true and proper." The meaning of the last clause of these quotations is not quite apparent; otherwise we take the whole of these remarks to be highly important, as defining so distinctly the proper province of analogy. "Its operation is negative," it shows what a passage *cannot* mean; and thus,

we may add clearly indicates, in those cases in which the *original* words of Scripture may support two or more interpretations, which is the right one. For example, suppose the Greek in some particular text to admit (as sometimes happens) of two different renderings. In such a case it is evident that philology will not serve us. It cannot teach us which of the two senses to take. Analogy, however, in such a case, may enable us to decide without hesitation. One of the two significations may be found uncongenial with the general tenor of Scripture, and we at once reject it; the other may be every way consistent with Scripture, and we unhesitatingly adopt it. Cases of difficulty may, however, sometimes occur, in which we may find ourselves thrown back upon the doctrine of probabilities, and in the absence of any perfectly satisfactory sense, shall find ourselves necessitated to adopt that which, from a consideration of the connection and a comprehensive view of the whole subject, seems best to accord with reason and with Scripture. We may, indeed, lay it down as a sound principle of interpretation, applicable to cases of this kind, that when a passage admits of two or more different ways of explanation, both of which may be equally accordant with grammatical rules and philological accuracy, the preference must unquestionably be given to that which appears most consonant with right reason, and most agreeable to the whole analogy of the faith.

In the following investigation into some of the

principal points of the baptismal controversy, we shall use just any kind of reasoning that the occasion may seem to require. If the arguments adduced are not founded upon the solid basis of inspired truth, we shall expect to see them hurled to the ground; nor indeed, in that case, could we wish them to stand. If not fairly deduced from Scripture, let them by all means be rejected; for they will be worthless. "To the law and to the testimony; if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us." If our arguments are illegitimate or illogical, let their irrelevancy and inconclusiveness be made manifest. If unsound, let the flaw be detected. If nothing is proved, we hope to have our own mind convinced that our argument is nugatory. We wish, of all things, to be preserved from error; and no charge of inconsistency, or fickleness should intimidate us from changing sides a hundred times, if, by doing so, we could get nearer to the real sentiments of Scripture. Honesty, candour, truth, are, we hope, infinitely dearer to us than victory.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMISSION.

THE evangelists Matthew and Mark, as is well known, record our Lord's commission to his disciples relative to the ordinance of baptism in somewhat different language. Dr Halley refers chiefly to the statement as given by the former of these two evangelists, viz., "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing *them* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." His views of the nature and extent of this commission will be best understood by quoting his own words. "The question," he says, "concerning the subjects of baptism is here resolved into one of grammar and criticism. It is simply, what is the antecedent to the word *them*, or for what noun is that pronoun substituted? Going forth, disciple all the nations (*παντα τα ἔθνη*), baptizing *them* (*αὐτοὺς*)—all the nations—into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them—all the nations—to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. So far as the grammatical

construction is concerned, the meaning of the terms is precisely the same as it would be if the words of the commission were, *Baptize all the nations*. Adhering, therefore, to the grammar of the words, we say the commission, which no man has a right to alter, is, Baptize all the nations." * Again, we read: "When he (Christ) says, Teach all the nations, what right have I to exclude any who can be taught? And when he says, Baptize all the nations, what right have I to exclude any who can be baptized?" † In another place, we have these words: "We feel bound by its terms to maintain that it is the duty of the Christian Church both to baptize and to teach, to the utmost extent within its power, 'all the nations,' " &c.; ‡ and once more: "To any part of the commission, the discipling, the baptizing, or the teaching, I know only one limitation, and that is the want of ability to execute it." § With these quotations before us, there can be no mistake as to Dr Halley's ideas of the extent of this commission. He openly argues that it is not to be in any way limited; that men, women, and children, are to be indiscriminately baptized; that, in a word, none are to be excluded who *can* be baptized or taught. The case is put very boldly. We shall see how far Dr Halley adheres to his own principle, and how far that principle is defensible.

We propose to meet these views of Dr Halley,

* The Sacraments, pp. 488, 489. † P. 491. ‡ P. 493.
§ P. 494.

first, in a course of analogical reasoning; and, after this, we will proceed to examine the question of grammar and syntax. From the very nature of our reasonings from analogy, this part of our discussion will necessarily have a more especial bearing upon the case of adults. But if our argument be good against the indiscriminate application of baptism to them, it will carry the case of infants along with it. All that applies in the one case, will apply, *à fortiori*, in the other.

Dr Halley says: "We are to baptize *all we can*." We beg leave then, first of all, to ask, How is this commission, which is to be limited only by an impossibility of executing it, to be carried into effect? It will, we presume, be admitted that neither fraud nor force are to be employed; that the administration of any religious ceremony, under such circumstances, and by such means, would be manifestly uncongenial with the spirit and genius of Christianity, which, disallowing of all physical force or artifice, makes use only of moral means and appliances. But, if Dr Halley will not justify the use of fraud or force (and of course he will not), then, at the very outset, he surrenders the principle of *literal* interpretation, and no-limitation. We refer him to his own illustration respecting the Canaanites,* in which he intimates, truly enough, that it was the duty of Israel to expel them, *vi et armis*, from the land. If he stand up for *literality*, for no limita-

* The Sacraments, p, 491.

tion, except what impossibility imposes, then, to be consistent, he ought to advocate the application of physical force or stratagem. Not doing this, he himself puts the first limitation upon the words of the commission, and that, too, despite of grammar and syntax.

Setting aside fraud and force, what then, we ask, is to be done in order to carry out this commission to the widest possible extent? We learn Dr Halley's opinion upon this point from the manner in which he meets an anticipated objection at page 491:—"Should it be said, that it is impossible to obey the command without some limitation, because great multitudes will not submit to Christian baptism, the reply is obvious, as the command certainly imposes upon us no more than we are able to perform." That is, we are not to baptize those who are not willing to be baptized; and, though Dr. Halley does not say it in so many words, it is plain that the principle on which he would administer the ordinance, is that of obtaining the consent of the parties baptized—that *willingness* is regarded by him as a necessary qualification. But is not this putting a limitation upon the words of the commission? Is it not running away from his own literal sense? *We*, of course, object not to this limitation. We would only have it noted, that even the great advocate of the no-limitation-scheme cannot himself carry it out. But letting that pass, we will now understand that willingness is the supposed pre-requisite for baptism.

And, here, we must be especially careful lest our subject should become mystified by any ambiguity that may be found lurking in a word, where perhaps no ambiguity would be suspected. Is this willingness to be an ignorant passive compliance with the proposal of the administrator? or is it to be a willingness founded on a certain degree of knowledge? First, we will suppose it to be the former; we will suppose that a simple expression of willingness, without any previous knowledge of Christianity, is sufficient to authorize the administration of the ordinance of baptism. To prove that this notion is untenable, will not require much force of argumentation. There is no evidence deducible from the Scriptures that baptism was ever performed on this principle. Pædo-baptists cannot produce one single passage that necessarily implies it. Cases, we are aware, may be instanced, which seem, in some points, to furnish an apparent probability that the apostles were in the habit of baptizing indiscriminately any who offered themselves, without regard to character. But if it should appear that such a practice is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the religion of Jesus Christ, a mere probability, in the absence of positive proof, must be set down at nought. Now, nothing appears to us plainer, than that the theory of baptizing indiscriminately, and irrespective of character, is totally uncongenial with the nature and genius of Christianity. Our argument lies in a very small space. It just amounts to this, that the prac-

tice of indiscriminate baptism can in no way be made to accord with the fact (for fact it unquestionably is), that the Bible everywhere treats man as a rational creature, a moral agent, an accountable being. That man *is* dealt with in this character in the Word of God; that all its appeals are made to him as such; that Christianity, in a word, is adapted to the intellectual and moral constitution of man, will, we suppose, without hesitation be admitted. Here, then, we take our stand, and, with this cardinal principle as our lever, we imagine it to be a very easy thing to move a world of probabilities.

This theory of our Lord's commission, which regards it as enjoining the universal administration of baptism, on the ground of no other qualification than that of an avowal of ignorant willingness, overlooking entirely the moral accountability of man, which necessarily pre-supposes knowledge, does not treat him even as though he were endowed with reason. If any one does but say he is willing to be baptized, no matter how ignorant he may be, no matter though he have no intelligible idea of what he wishes to do, he is a proper subject for baptism! Why, such a theory makes Christianity the most unreasonable thing in the world! It represents the Bible dealing with men, in this particular case of baptism, unlike its uniform practice, as if he had no rational or moral capacities! It brings mature age down to infancy, and treats men as if they were babes, imposing upon them an initiatory rite, and

thus formally constituting them disciples, though at the time they are entirely in the dark as to the nature of the whole transaction; and while consenting to a religious act, are, for want of knowledge, incapable of exercising any moral judgments about it! Can it be, that the very first step in religion should be taken thus blindly? Can Christianity sanction anything of the kind? Is it so, that the very act by which we are supposed to become disciples to Christ, has no moral character belonging to it—as must be the case, if baptism, though acceded to willingly, is received ignorantly? The whole tenor of Scripture condemns the supposition—the whole analogy of the faith condemns it. To produce *specific* passages of Scripture, in opposition to this view of the commission, we take to be altogether a work of supererogation. THE WHOLE BIBLE is against it. The method of proselytizing or making disciples, which such an exposition proposes, reminds us forcibly of the practice of certain secret societies, which allow not even the slightest idea of their rules or principles to be known by candidates for admission, until, by the regular forms of initiation, they become *bonâ fide* members. It makes Christianity a kind of religious free-masonry, a system of fraud after all—something very different from what, irrespective of this controversy, we have been accustomed to regard it. We cannot, therefore, yield our assent to such an explanation of the commission; but we find ourselves honestly and inevitably led to the conclu-

sion, that whatever the language, "Teach all nations, baptizing," *may* mean, it certainly does not, and cannot import, that all who avow a mere ignorant willingness are suitable subjects for baptism.

And now, if we endeavour to imagine, just for a moment, how the commission, as above explained, would have to be carried into execution, we shall see that what we have shown to be unreasonable is also absurd, and even ridiculous. In our own enlightened land, but very few opportunities could, in the nature of things, occur of administering baptism to persons entirely ignorant of the Christian religion. But, if the commission was intended to be performed on the principle we are now examining, doubtless many instances of this kind must have been contemplated. The disciples were to go with the commission in their hands to all nations—to heathen nations—to people entirely unacquainted with Christianity. Amongst these nations, they were to induce all they possibly could to be baptized—not to teach them first, but to baptize them in order to make them learners. How, then, would a missionary going out to a heathen land proceed to carry out the commission thus understood? We may suppose that he would collect the natives around him, and open the business somewhat in this way: Good people, I have come to teach you a new religion, and if you are willing to learn it, the first thing necessary is, that you should be baptized with water, that you may be made learners. Are you willing to be baptized,

and learn this new religion? Some, we may suppose, would, either from curiosity or regard for the teacher, or without any ascertainable motive, accede to the proposal, and would forthwith be baptized with water, in some form, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and thus be discipled to Christ. Others, we may suppose, more shrewd than their simpler brethren, would think within themselves, that they would, at least, like to know a little about this new religion before they consented to submit to baptism; and, therefore, of course, the baptizer would have to wait their pleasure before he could baptize them. But this would be no part of *his* plan. If a simple avowal of willingness, without any previous knowledge, is all that is requisite for baptism, his duty evidently would be, not to teach first, but to act just as we have supposed; that is, he would inquire, first, who were willing to be baptized, and without any further preliminaries, would proceed at once to baptize all who offered themselves for that purpose. The mere statement of this hypothetical case is quite enough to condemn it. Does it not strike us as a most absurd supposition? And yet, if baptism is to be performed on a mere avowal of ignorant willingness, this would be the only natural way of proceeding.

Now, on the other hand, in what way should we naturally expect Christianity to make its first advances, and win its way amongst the nations? We should expect that, having first of all summoned

men to an audience, it would begin, *ab initio*, to make them acquainted with its leading truths and doctrines; that it would make *teaching* the very first thing to be done, leaving every one at liberty to form his own judgments concerning the truths made known; that, instead of making men learners by a formal act of initiation before they have begun to learn, it would, from the very first, make them learners *de facto*, by conveying instruction to their minds; that instead of immediately setting about the work of proselytizing, which implies, as it respects the proselyte, not having the means or opportunity of judging intelligently and honestly for himself, it would first of all afford those who might be disposed to receive instruction every facility for understanding what Christianity is, and would then leave them, as free agents, perfectly at liberty, either to discontinue learning, or to go on in a course of Christian instruction till, from enlightened conviction, they should avow themselves sincere and genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never should we expect Christianity to make its first appearance in the administration of a formal religious ceremony. Performed on a mere avowal of willingness, without any previous instruction or knowledge—performed as *preparatory* to instruction, to put people in a capacity to learn, to *make* them learners—baptism really appears to us a perfect anomaly, a total subversion of the natural order of things. Obviously, the natural, common-sense way is, to begin with teaching; and

if so, then, what do we want with baptism as a mere rite of initiation? "*Cui bono?*" What intelligible end can it answer? It cannot be supposed to confer any advantages in the mere matter of learning; for the commencement and progress of the act of instruction itself, whether baptism be resorted to or not, must, in either case, be precisely the same. So far from aiding instruction, initiatory baptism interrupts the natural process of imparting it, being obtruded at a most unseasonable time, and altogether wearing the aspect of a very unmeaning and impertinent ceremony. Thus, then, we find that reason conspires with Scripture to pronounce an unhesitating verdict against the notion, that a mere ignorant compliance with the proposal of the administrator is a sufficient qualification for baptism; and we shall hope to make it appear evident before we have done, that there is nothing in the phraseology of the commission, as related by Matthew, which compels us to so unnatural an opinion. Whatever the language of Matthew, considered philologically, *may* mean, as we said before, we see very plainly, from the whole analogy of the faith, what it *cannot* mean. Ere long we shall go into this question philologically, and shall do so with the fullest confidence that we shall find nothing in the terms employed, correctly and grammatically interpreted, that in any way disagrees with the uniform tenor of the Scriptures.

But we must now examine the other notion of the word willingness, viz., that of its arising out of a cer-

tain degree of previous knowledge. It will probably be admitted, that *some* acquaintance with the doctrines of Scripture is requisite previously to the administration of baptism. Having seen already that the principle of no-limitation cannot be carried out, that neither fraud nor force must be made use of, may we not now also presume that it will be admitted that a mere ignorant assent cannot justify the administration of baptism, but that the language of the commission must needs be limited even yet a little further? It will, we think, be admitted, that to baptize any one in a state of perfect ignorance, would be to act contrary to the very spirit of Christianity; that an adult, at least, must have some knowledge of the nature of the act he is about to submit to in offering himself to be baptized. Then, in this case, we ask, How much is to be known as constituting a proper qualification for baptism? Acting on the principle of limiting the commission as little as possible, Dr Halley and our Pædo-baptist brethren would probably say, that a very small amount of knowledge is sufficient—that the mere elements of Christianity are all that need be known. Be it so; and we will now therefore understand, that an elementary acquaintance with the Christian religion is the extent of the qualification requisite; *that we have no right to impose any moral qualification*; that nothing more is necessary than a bare acquaintance with the leading characteristics of the Gospel.

Now, we meet this notion on precisely the same principle as that we have just been reviewing. It may be easily shown that while it is a step in the right direction, it nevertheless stops short of that kind of qualification which we conceive the whole analogy of truth evidently requires. The Scriptures demand godly sincerity, purity of motive, genuine principle, in every act of a religious nature; and why, contrary to all analogy, should our Pædo-baptist friends wish to impair and shake, as it were, to its very foundations the important general principle, that conscientious conviction and integrity of character are in all cases necessary, and seek to establish, in one particular case, an opposite principle? why should they wish to prove that the ordinance of baptism (not surely the least important of all religious duties) may be rightly performed when the heart is not right with God? that, provided a man has some general knowledge of Christianity, purity of heart and true religious principle are not essential to the discharge of this particular duty? that this is an exception to all others? A man of no principle whatever—one, on the contrary, who entertains an utter hatred and contempt for the truth—may, as is the case in thousands of instances, possess an accurate knowledge of the first principles of the Christian religion. And could we say, supposing such a character were to solicit baptism at our hands, that there is no need to inquire into his motives? that we have nothing to do with his character? that, possessing a

certain amount of unsanctified knowledge, he, in submitting to baptism, fulfils every condition that is required? that he does this duty well and rightly? Such a latitudinarian and dangerous notion is utterly condemned by the analogy of our faith; and we cannot but believe, until we have clear demonstration to the contrary, that, as in all other cases, so in this, something more than mere knowledge is necessary, in receiving baptism, to impart validity to that ordinance. And, strange as it may appear, we, in this judgment, have Dr Halley on our side. He intimates (p. 496), that the application for baptism must not be “made scoffingly and profanely, for that would be a manifest desecration of the service.” Why, this looks as if Dr. Halley would advocate some kind of moral qualification, and would require purity of motive and sincerity: seriousness of character, at least, he requires. How he can make this consistent with his indiscriminate no-limitation principle, we must leave him to explain. His views really appear to us to be characterized by an unprecedented singularity. The language of the commission, he argues, is to be understood without limitation—all nations are to be baptized; and yet the subjects of baptism, by his own showing, are to be *willing* subjects. They are also to be *sober* and *serious* characters. Well, to say nothing of the inconsistency of all this, we are gratified to find the Doctor, after all, approaching to the very verge of our own opinions. He only needs to take one more step in

advance, and allow that religious principle ought to be required in candidates for baptism, and his desertion of the principle with which he set out will be complete. At any rate, he has no right to meet us with his arguments about the literal sense, and no restriction, if we think ourselves more consistent than he is in taking a little additional license with the universal terms employed.

If any should object to the above mode of reasoning, that sincerity and even piety may consist with a low degree of knowledge, we readily allow it, and indeed hail the sentiment as an implied further admission from the opposite side, and as manifestly helping our cause. But if it shall be argued, that since sincerity and religious principle may co-exist with a very small amount of knowledge, we have no right to withhold baptism from any who have such knowledge, as we cannot tell that they are not sincere religious characters, this opens a very important question, viz., What is the proper province of the administrator of baptism? Is any discrimination, and if any, what, to be exercised by him in baptizing? Is the performance of the rite suspended upon his judgment, or not? Has he the prerogative, or has he not, of judging as to the fitness of candidates?

Now, that some discrimination must, as a matter of necessity, be exercised, is, I think, very manifest, for—

1. If baptism was not intended to be administered universally and without distinction, as I think the

foregoing argument has proved, then it will follow, without any begging of the question, that there *must* be discrimination; and if so, of course, there must be some one to discriminate, and this office or duty must devolve upon the baptizer, or upon him in connection with the brethren with whom he is associated.

2. But, secondly, Dr Halley himself admits, that, in some cases, there must be discrimination; for he says, the ordinance is not to be administered to scoffers and blasphemers—implying, of course, that in particular cases the administrator must judge respecting the fitness of applicants for baptism.

3. Supposing that mere acquaintance with the first principles of Christian knowledge were the only qualification required, discrimination would be called for even here. Low as such a qualification is, there would be need for the administrator to judge whether or no it were possessed before he could feel himself justified in proceeding to baptize an applicant.

4. But if it be allowed, that, together with knowledge, sincerity and piety are also requisite, much more will discrimination then be needed; and if, even on the Pædo-baptist hypothesis, it turns out that the administrator must certify himself that a candidate possesses the requisite amount of knowledge, and that he is an honest, sober, and serious character, then, who can say that some further discrimination may not be exercised by him? who can say that the prerogative of judging of the motives and of the religious or spiritual character of his fellow-man is not com-

mitted to him, or at least to the Church of which he is the executive? The whole question comes simply to one of degree. Without converting the minister into an inquisitor, and making one fallible being an infallible judge of another (for God only can judge infallibly), we yet do consider that it is the duty of the Church to preserve its purity in the exercise of that spiritual wisdom which it is supposed to possess, and by which it ought ever to be guided.* Baptism we

* The following paragraph, from a series of papers on "Church Principles," published in the *Christian Witness* in the year 1845, is so much to our purpose, that we cannot forbear inserting it:—

"If it be objected that men cannot make the state of each other's hearts the basis of their fellowship, that communion among men must be ordered according to what appears externally of character and conduct; this is denied, both as a general proposition, and in its application to the union of Christians in Churches in particular. There are many, and frequent, important and sacred relations in human society constantly based on the state of the heart, mutually declared and believed. It is a thing easy and natural to be done, that Christians, feeling within the deep and living work of grace, should disclose the experience of their hearts to those with whom, on things so sacred, interesting, and tender, they can hold sympathy and fellowship. There are wise, considerate, and delicate ways in which this can be done even by (query, in the case of) young and timid Christians, through pastors and experienced members, as the way in which communion with Churches is sought and obtained. Wisdom and experience in heart religion will qualify Churches and their elders to form judgments generally accurate of the cases thus submitted to their charity and fidelity. The whole principle, in all its applications, that spiritual conversion and piety form the true and only qualification for the communion of saints, is a constant exercise of vital religion, a stedfast testimony to it, a frequent and delightful enjoyment of its holy pleasures."

regard as a Church ordinance, intended to be administered only to such as are fit to be recognised as members of some particular Church. The platform of a Christian Church is laid down in the New Testament, and the required qualifications of its members; and, consequently, the *real* fitness of any individual for membership and baptism, depends not upon any human judgments, but upon his conformity to scriptural requirements. If he possesses this conformity, he belongs to the true, spiritual, universal Church, whether he is admitted to any particular Church or not; and, of course, whatever the judgment of man may be, is a fit subject for baptism. From the necessary imperfections of all human judgments, some may be baptized and admitted to the Church who are unfit for such a privilege; while, on the other hand, some may be kept back, who already belong to "the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

It may, however, be further objected, that, as it regards admission to any particular community of Christians, the same Church that receives, is competent, in case of necessity, to reject; but that, if baptism has been once administered, it is not within any human power to unbaptize, in case of the party subsequently proving unfit for the ordinance. Now, in answer to this, we may say, first, that such cases as these are not likely often to occur—that they are, doubtless, the exception to the rule, especially in well regulated Churches; and, secondly, when they do

occur, that baptism has been misapplied, and the scriptural *intention* of the ordinance is defeated.*

We only remark further, in view of the above admissions, that if, previously to baptism, it be deemed that an elementary acquaintance with Christianity is essential, baptism itself can, in no sense, be explained as an initiatory ordinance. This form of designation, as generally used by Pædo-baptists, is, in this case, evidently inapplicable. If previous knowledge is requisite, baptism, of course, cannot initiate to learning; and consequently the idea, which so generally prevails, of its being the rite of initiation into the school of Christ—a rite constituting an individual a disciple of Christ, however plausible the mere words may sound, is only a vain fancy. Adopted and employed in the strict and *proper* sense, as an initiatory ordinance, we have already seen what kind of aspect it wears in that point of view. According to our own opinion, which will be better understood when we have explained our idea of Christian discipleship, it does not inaugurate into discipleship—does not *constitute* disciples, but simply *recognises* them.

And now let us collect into one point of view the substance of what we have debated thus far. Our object has been to canvass the opinion, that the language, “Teach all nations, baptizing,” is not in any way to be limited, but that we are to baptize all we can. We began by remarking that, assuredly, neither fraud nor force must be pressed into service in this

* For more on this subject see chapter ii.

holy warfare. We then showed that, at least, willingness, on the part of candidates for baptism, was necessary. We went on to show, that this willingness might be understood as either an ignorant or a partially enlightened willingness. We proved that, to baptize on a mere ignorant avowal of willingness, was to treat man like an infant or an idiot, rather than as a rational being and moral agent, contrary to the whole analogy of Scripture truth; and then went on to prove, on the same principle, that mere elementary knowledge could not be viewed as a sufficient qualification for baptism—since the Scriptures everywhere require sincerity of heart and piety in the performance of every religious duty. We observed, moreover, that even Dr Halley himself, contrary to his own principle, allows that willingness, and even seriousness, are essential pre-requisites for baptism—no unimportant admission, since it completely surrenders the indiscriminate theory; and, in answering certain objections, we have also proved that it is the prerogative of the administrator of baptism to judge of the qualifications and fitness of candidates. Thus far, then, we have advanced, and shall now proceed to give explicitly our own views of the baptismal commission; and, in so doing, shall fearlessly go into the question of grammar and verbal criticism.

It is now, indeed, full time to enter the penetralia of the Temple of truth, and consult the oracle of philosophy. Like the Grecian oracles, it may perhaps, owing to the necessary imperfection of language, speak

to us in somewhat ambiguous terms. But then it is a satisfaction to know that it was not *designed* to be obscure; and happily we have a key to unlock its mysteries—a principle by which to resolve its ambiguity, to decide between its double meanings, and to select, as we believe, without mistake, the true one. We beg that Dr Davidson's rule may here again be borne in mind, viz., "That analogy teaches what an obscure passage *cannot* mean;" and thus, as we said before, goes very far towards leading us to ascertain what it *does* mean. If, for instance, we have previously concluded that a mere ignorant willingness, on the one hand, and a willingness founded on elementary knowledge, on the other, are not sufficient qualifications for baptism, we necessarily conclude that the language of Matthew, in reference to the baptismal commission, is not to be interpreted so generally as to make baptism imperative upon subjects thus imperfectly qualified; and our object must be to show that it *can*, and *may*, and *does*, imply the necessity of some higher qualification. If we merely show that the words of Matthew *can* support an interpretation implying the necessity of sincerity and faith, this is enough—this is all we need do; for, *if* such an interpretation be at all admissible by the rules of grammar and philology, we could not hesitate for a moment to pronounce it the right one, even though the mere language may equally well admit of a wider signification. Into this let us now inquire, critically examining, first, into the meaning of the word *μαθητευω*.

Very many pages of criticism have been written upon this single word; and, as it appears to me, a great deal of superfluous labour has been bestowed upon it. If the word be rendered simply to teach, such a sense is obviously favourable to the conclusions of analogy; for though the word *μαθητευσω* may be considered as limiting the necessary knowledge to first principles, yet, without urging the difficulty of exactly defining first principles, it cannot, at all events, be questioned but that saving faith may originate even from them. And, moreover, bringing analogy to bear upon the question, we contend that the very intention of the teaching must be understood to be nothing less than to produce faith, to make converts. We contend, too, that the apostles would so understand it; and that when their Lord said, "Teach and baptize," they would immediately, as a matter of course, infer that the object of their teaching must be to bring men to believe the Gospel. Only in this way can the command, "Teach and baptize," be interpreted so as not to clash with the whole doctrine of Scripture. The teaching must be understood as designed to result in faith previously to the administration of baptism.

But, taking the word in question to signify to disciple, "Go ye therefore and *disciple* all nations," a rendering which better accords with the etymology of the word, we shall, if we mistake not, still find ourselves conducted to precisely the same result. The verb *μαθητευσω* occurs but four times in the Greek

Testament—twice in an active, and twice in a passive sense. The *first* instance of its ever being used in an active signification, is this of the commission, as recorded by Matthew. The verb must, doubtless, be regarded as a derivative of the substantive μαθητής, a disciple. Consequently, the right way to judge of the proper meaning of the verb is to ascertain, first, the sense in which the primitive noun is used. Let us inquire a little into this.

The word μαθητής is of very frequent occurrence in the New Testament, being applied to the disciples of John as well as to those of Jesus. It is an interesting question in itself, and one that leads direct to the point of our inquiry, Whether the characteristics and qualifications of the disciples of John and of Jesus were the same? and whether, in these respects, there was any difference between those who were recognised as disciples of Jesus during his ministry and life, and those who were constituted and regarded as such after his death. In respect to both these questions we take the affirmative, to establish which we offer the following considerations.

A disciple, in the ordinary sense of the word, denotes one who embraces the tenets or the doctrines of any particular school of philosophy or religion. Thus, by a disciple of Plato, we understand one who believed what Plato taught; by a disciple of Moses, one who believed in Moses and his writings; and, on the same principle, by a disciple of John the Baptist, we understand one who received what John the

Baptist was raised up to teach; and by a disciple of Jesus, one who believed in him, and all that he taught and enjoined. The obvious way, then, to judge of the character and qualifications of a disciple is, first, to inquire into the doctrine of the Master; and, to decide upon the point under review, we must take into consideration the characteristics of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, and the circumstances which distinguish the transition from the one to the other. Now, as it regards the Mosaic or Jewish dispensation, it is unquestionable that, while its ultimate aim, through the medium of typical observances, was to inculcate spiritual truth, it also admitted to a participation in its rites and ceremonies indiscriminately any and all who were descended from Abraham. Under that dispensation no outward or visible distinction was made between one Jew and another. All were admitted, quite irrespective of character, to all the observances and ordinances of religion. He who adhered to the letter of the law of Moses, however ungodly and unprincipled he might be, was, *as a Jew*, perfect and blameless—an acknowledged disciple of Moses. But it will be admitted, that Christianity, in its principles and requirements, is essentially different from Judaism. *That* was the dispensation of the letter; *this* of the spirit. The mere outward observance of rites and ordinances cannot constitute a man a Christian. Spirituality is now requisite in every duty that is performed. The letter fades, the spirit alone remains. A mere formalist might be a

disciple of Moses; only a spiritual person can be a disciple of Christ.

The period commencing with the preaching of John the Baptist, and extending through the whole life of Jesus till his death, seems to have had characteristics peculiar to itself. It was a transition period—a kind of brief intermediate dispensation between that of the letter and of the spirit. It partook, therefore, of the features of both. It was designed to prepare gradually for a more spiritual state of things. John came forth from the wilderness announcing the speedy advent of the Messiah. In the midst of universal formalism he appeared as a great reformer. His mission was, to call the nation to repentance, in anticipation of the coming of Christ. He instituted a new ordinance—the baptism of repentance. He taught that something more was necessary than external rites. But to have required satisfactory evidence of repentance having taken place, would have been to have anticipated that spiritual dispensation for which things were not yet ripe. Therefore we find, that while he powerfully and solemnly insisted upon the necessity of repentance, and warned the Pharisees of the inutility of his baptism to them unless they brought forth fruits meet for repentance; still, he did not refuse to baptize any who professed to believe in the speedy coming of the expected Messiah. His preaching and his baptism were eminently adapted to call off the minds of the Jews from cold, lifeless forms, to the living soul of religion, and thus to “prepare

the way of the Lord." A disciple of John was not, therefore, necessarily a spiritual person, but one just emerging from the dim shadows of Judaism to the purer and clearer light of Christianity.

While John was yet in the midst of his public labours, Jesus came into notice as a great teacher amongst the people; and, taking up the same sentiment as John the Baptist had made the chief theme of his ministry, he preached, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But it is important to remark, that during the whole of his public course Jesus was careful not to make a full disclosure of his designs. The time was not yet come. He shrouded himself in obscurity so long as he was on the earth; and it was not till he died that, like a sun, he arose from behind the clouds that hung over his cross, and gathered around his tomb, and poured the full blaze of heavenly light over his spiritual kingdom. The preaching of Jesus was indeed spiritual in the highest degree. But Judaism, with its ritual of forms, was not yet abolished, and even Jesus himself conformed to its rites and requisitions. Things were not *even yet* ripe for founding a purely spiritual incorporation. The Saviour taught most distinctly the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and yet, yielding to the spirit of Judaism, the time not having arrived for its absolute and everlasting extinction, he seems to have admitted into his kingdom precisely the same class of persons as John the Baptist had done before him, viz., all who acknowledged their belief in the

near appearance of the Messiah, whether they recognised *him* as the "Coming One" or not; and thus, that kingdom was of a mixed character during his life, though intended to consist eventually only of spiritual people. Real conversion was not, therefore, indispensable to constitute a disciple of Jesus *during his life and ministry*.

But, admitting this, I go on to contend, that this is no rule to us for judging of the character and qualifications of a true disciple of Christ. Many were allowed to be called disciples of Christ in the peculiar state of things then existing, whom Jesus himself never viewed as true disciples, and never contemplated as the persons who were to form his future Church. Nor must we overlook the fact, that many of the disciples of Jesus, even in his own day, were sincere, genuine characters. Take, for example, the twelve apostles. These, with only one exception, were men of true religion—men who believed in Jesus, and kept his commandments. And, though it is admitted that they entertained some mistaken notions respecting the designs of Christ, until the period of his death and resurrection, yet we are told that "to them it was given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, while to those that were without these things were taught in parables." Observe, again, the meaning of the word disciple, as applied to the seventy disciples, of whom we read Luke x. 1, *et seq.* These evidently were genuine characters; for Jesus sent them out two by two into all the cities of Judea,

preaching the gospel, and their names are said to have been written in heaven. And surely, when we read that "many believed on him," as we frequently do, making a large deduction for those who may be supposed merely to have expressed their faith in him as the Messiah, we are yet warranted to suppose that not a few of them were brought truly to "believe in Jesus," especially as Paul tells us that after the resurrection the Lord was seen by five hundred *brethren* at once. This, indeed, clearly proves that amongst the numerous disciples of Jesus, there were at least that number of true converts. How many more there might have been it is impossible to say; but it is hardly to be supposed that all, from all parts of the land, who truly believed on him, were collected together on that particular occasion. If five hundred of the brethren saw him *then*, no doubt there were in all *many* more than these in other parts of the country, in those "many towns and villages" where Jesus "went preaching the gospel." Now, these considerations are very important; for, not to infer from them more than we are justified in doing, they do most certainly prove that, though the word *μαθηταις* was used in a loose and general sense, to denote any who professed their faith in Christ as the Messiah, it was also well known to have a more important sense, as denoting those who were truly converted in heart to Jesus, and were, in the true and best signification of the word, "disciples."

We may learn, moreover, the true character of a

disciple, and the sense in which the word, as employed in the commission, should be naturally understood, from the contrast which the false and treacherous Judas presents to the other eleven apostles. He, like them, was designated both an apostle and a disciple. But we may as well argue that Judas was a true apostle, because he bore the name, and that there was no need for the apostles to be good men, as that he was, in any proper sense of the word, a disciple. We do not form our idea of an apostle from the case of Judas, nor, in any reason, can we decide upon the meaning of the term, disciple, from the fact of the traitor having been called by that name. Judas was no more a true disciple than a true apostle. Precisely on the same principle we argue that, though many went by the name of disciples during the time that Christ was on the earth, and preparing to establish his kingdom, yet they were not such in any proper or legitimate use of the term, and that Jesus himself never recognised them as such. We may learn what our Lord's own idea of a disciple was from his own language (John viii. 31): "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye *continue* in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." They might be *called* disciples if they *professed* their faith in Jesus; but they were not so truly unless they *continued* in the faith of Jesus. Again, Jesus says (Luke xiv. 26, 27): "If any man *come to* me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he *cannot*

be my disciple; and whosoever doth not *bear his cross*, and come after me, he cannot be my disciple." Nothing can be more explicit than this. The mere coming to Christ did not constitute a man a disciple, though, in an accommodated and secondary use of the word, he might be called so. Unless a man had principle enough to sacrifice all for Christ, he was not, in the view of Jesus, a disciple.

Then, we must not forget that the baptismal commission was given after the death and resurrection of Christ, and that those events had shed new light upon the minds of the disciples relative to the nature of his kingdom, and the true character of his disciples. *Then* it was that the Mosaic economy ceased; then that mixed state of things that had distinguished the intermediate period between the old and new dispensations was brought to a close; *then* the spiritual reign of Christ properly commenced. *Now* the apostles understood clearly the nature of Christ's kingdom. Now those truths which before were cast into the shade stood out in bold relief in the broad daylight of the gospel. Now they knew that Jesus was truly the Son of God, and that nothing but faith in his atoning death could constitute any one a member of his spiritual kingdom. Now, too, all that he had so often taught them concerning the character of his disciples—that they must be such as were ready to forsake all for him, and such as would continue in his word—would come with fresh vividness and force to their minds, and they would naturally understand that henceforth none were to be recognised as the disciples of Jesus but such as

answered to this character. When, therefore, after his death and resurrection, our Lord gave the command, "Go, *disciple* all nations," there is no reason to suppose that they would misapprehend it. They would, doubtless, understand the word "disciple" in the sense in which the Lord had himself explained it; they would understand it as a command to go and convert all the nations. But even if the disciples of Christ did not at first understand the command as we have explained it, our argument remains unaffected. We have the Word of God, and must form our own judgment respecting it; and it may be that we are in better circumstances to form a correct judgment of our Lord's intention than, at the time (supposing they were left to judge for themselves), the apostles were. Taking all things into consideration, there seems to us no reason to doubt, but that we are to understand the verb, μαθητεύσατε in the sense which our Lord himself has so distinctly assigned to the noun, μαθητῆς. But if it yet be objected, Why should we not understand the word in the more general sense, since all, with no discrimination as to character, were called disciples in the time of Christ? we reply, agreeably to the above reasoning, The analogy of our faith forbids. The word admits of being understood either in a general or a particular sense, though, as we think, we have shown the latter is the proper signification. But, allowing it to bear either meaning, and, with the acquaintance we have with Christianity, we cannot hesitate for a moment between the two.

It appears, then, from all these considerations taken together, that though the word, μαθητής, is sometimes used to signify merely a follower of Jesus, there is but one accredited sense in which it can be understood. We must assuredly understand it in that sense in which, evidently, Jesus himself intended it to be understood. This, then, is our rule of judgment respecting the meaning of the verb, μαθητεύσατε in the commission for preaching the gospel, and baptizing. We cannot suppose that to make proselytes was all he meant them to do. We cannot imagine that this was the extent of his command. No. We must interpret the verb according to our Lord's own explanation of the noun. We must take the command, "Disciple all the nations," in its *best* sense, as strictly and properly signifying, make converts (as Dr. Campbell, in his translation of the Gospels, renders it), make true, genuine believers. The verb μαθητεύω may, in a free and loose manner, be translated, "Teach." But the full import of the word is not arrived at, till the intended result of that teaching is realized—till sinners are brought to Christ, and made his disciples. Consequently, the best way of rendering the word is, *disciple*, or *make disciples*, which involves the notion of teaching, and implies something in addition. Make disciples; that is, preach, instruct, exhort, bring sinners to repentance, make them true believers. This we take to be the fair, legitimate meaning of this very significant and comprehensive word—a word newly coined, it would seem, to meet a particular exigency,

because no existing word could fully express the idea.

Understanding the word *μαθητεύσατε* in the sense above explained, the question, whether the words, *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*, are to be taken in a limited sense, or otherwise, is virtually settled. The apostles were, of course, to make all the converts they could. To what objections Dr Halley's theory of *baptizing* as many as possible lies open, we have already shown; but the same objection does not apply to the act of *making disciples*, since, as a matter of course, they were to do this by the use of appropriate and rational means—means harmonizing with the principles of Christianity. The world was before them, with all its different nations. Into all these nations they were to go, making it their great object to convert them all, if possible, to the true faith, and make all the inhabitants of the earth believing disciples of Jesus. This was their commission. In connection with this great work, they are directed to baptize all the nations; that is, they were to baptize all that they succeeded in discipling—all the world if possible. The baptizing was to be just co-extensive with the discipling.

This theory, however, which makes the act of baptizing consequent upon that of discipling, Dr Halley denies. He considers that disciples are to be made *by* baptizing. "Our commission," says he, "is to disciple as many as we can, by baptizing and by teaching them." (P. 578.) He says, again, in a

former part of the lecture (P. 491): "As to the limitation of the word baptize to those who are taught, we have, according to the letter of this commission, no more right to limit the command to baptize to those who are taught, than we have to limit the command to teach to those who are baptized." Now, without presuming to deny absolutely these assertions of the learned Doctor, we think it will be easy to prove that, in accordance with the rules of grammar, and the structure of language, the act of baptizing *may* be limited by that of making disciples. If it *may* without any violation of grammar, then we directly fall back upon the argument from analogy, and say, without hesitation, it *must*. In order to prove this, we have to ascertain whether the action of the participle, βαπτίζοντες, may be subsequent to that of the verb, μαθητεύσατε. If it may, then, taking the verb in our sense of making disciples, rather than in the defective sense of teaching, it will follow that the baptizing may be limited to those who are disciplined. The bare possibility of this is all that is necessary for our argument.

Grammarians, we are aware, teach, that a participle following a verb, is frequently used in Greek like the gerund in *do* in Latin, signifying the means or instrument. This we, of course, do not dispute. It is enough for us that this is not always the case—not an invariable rule. The truth is, the sense of a participle following a verb in Greek, is very indefinite; and in the Greek Testament (and the use of it there is every thing in this case), it very seldom signifies the

means. And, though the relation of time is but imperfectly expressed by the participle, yet, more frequently than not, it will be found that the action of the participle follows that of the verb.

That the baptizing in the commission does not *necessarily* imply the means of making disciples, and may be considered as designed to be performed *after* the act of making disciples, is abundantly evident from the following passages, in which, as any one may see by turning to them in the Greek Testament, precisely the same construction occurs. Matt. iii. 1: "In those days *came* John the baptist, *preaching*." The preaching here, plainly enough, does not imply the means. John did not come by means of preaching. And, though he preached wherever he journeyed, we are not justified in saying that he preached as he literally went along the road. In the order of time, we must understand that his preaching was consequent upon his coming to any place. Matt. xvii. 14: "There *came* a certain man, *kneeling*." The man would have looked very odd had he come by means of kneeling. He kneeled when he had come. The action of the participle "kneeling" is subsequent to that of the verb "came." Matt. xxvi. 55: "I *sat* daily with you, *teaching*." Christ did not sit by means of teaching, and certainly the teaching did not precede the sitting. Heb. ix. 6: "The priests *went* into the temple, *accomplishing* the service;" that is, they went into the temple in order to accomplish it; and the service which they had to accomplish, ac-

according to the institutions of Moses, could not be commenced till after they had entered the temple. Passages might be multiplied almost without end, in which similar construction occurs. But these which we have quoted are more than enough for our purpose. Sometimes, undoubtedly, the participle is used like the gerund in *do* in Latin, signifying means. But, from the above examples, it is sufficiently manifest that often it is not so used. Nay, it will be found by any who are willing to take the trouble to make an induction of passages for themselves, and to examine into this question of criticism, that there are far more cases in which the participle, following a verb, does not admit of being rendered as the means, than of those in which it must be so rendered. In some of the texts adduced, the participle is clearly used for the infinitive, expressing a purpose. In classical Greek this is done by the future participle, whereas these are all participles present. This, therefore, seems to present us with a peculiarity of the Hellenistic Greek. In every instance that we have adduced, some kind of relation manifestly subsists between the participle and the foregoing verb. After all, this kind of construction is manifestly very indefinite; so much so, that it seems impossible to establish any uniform principle of interpretation. The only safe and certain rule, therefore, is to adopt that interpretation which is best supported by the particular circumstances of the case, the connexion of the passage, or the analogy of the faith. The conclusion,

then, to which we come in regard to the language of the commission is this: That the act of baptizing *may* be limited to those who are discipled; that as the action of the participle more frequently than not follows that of the verb, the probability is that it does so here; that the interpretation which makes baptism follow discipleship is the only one that accords with the analogy of the faith; and, consequently, that *that* interpretation alone is the right one; that, in plain language, baptism is to be performed only upon those who have been previously discipled to Christ.

If the view we have thus been led to adopt be just, if it be grammatically and critically correct, it renders almost superfluous any examination of the words, “*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*,” and the pronoun, “*αὐτοὺς*,” referring to them. However, it can be easily shown that, by the *usus loquendi* of the Greek Testament, universal terms may be understood in a limited sense. The following are cases in point. “There came out to him *all* Judea, and *all* Jerusalem, and *all* the region round about Jordan.” Not every one, surely, without exception! “And, behold, the *whole city* came out to meet Jesus.” Not literally all the men, women, and children in the city, and little infants too! “And ye shall be hated of *all nations* for my sake.” This is particularly a case in point, as the very same words, “*all nations*,” are made use of, as occur in the commission. Hated by all nations! It does not mean that they would be hated by infants; nor does it mean that all of mature years, without exception,

would hate them. No : but plainly it means that a *certain class* of all nations would hate them (the majority, of course), viz., those who would not embrace their doctrine. Where, then, is the error of understanding the words "all nations," in the commission, in a limited sense? Who shall say, we have not a right to do so? "Disciple all the nations;" that is, disciple all you can; for here there is no need of limitation, since it was clearly right that the apostles should endeavour, in the use of appropriate means, to disciple all people in the world, not excluding even little children, so soon as suitable means could be brought to bear upon them : "baptizing them"—all nations; that is, all whom you are enabled to disciple; for here limitation is necessary, for reasons which need not be repeated. And we have good and sufficient warrant for such limitation, not only from the idiom of the language, which, as we have seen, allows the baptism to be considered as consequent upon the discipling, but also from the *usus loquendi* which, as just proved, justifies our understanding "all nations" in a limited sense.

Will it be objected here, that it is not allowable to limit the words, "all nations," in reference to the act of baptizing, while, in reference to that of making disciples, we give them the utmost universality? If so, it may be readily shown, that this is no more than what we do constantly in the common use of language. If a homely conventionalism may be allowed, we will suppose a command of this sort to be issued

(no matter whence): *Teetotalize* all the people of England, giving them the pledge. Could this be misunderstood? Would it not mean, Bring as many as possible over by argument and persuasion to the cause of temperance, and give the pledge to all who, being convinced, are willing to sign it? No one would argue that, because the command was universal, all were to sign the pledge, convinced or unconvinced. No one would understand it, Make all the people *teetotalers*, and give the pledge to all, indiscriminately, whether they consent to become so or not. Thus, though the universal terms, "All the people of England," were the antecedents of the pronoun "them," no misapprehension could take place. Limitation is clearly justifiable, nay, essentially necessary, by the ordinary use of language. Just on the same principle we argue that although the command, "Disciple all the nations," is universal, there is no necessity to understand the pronoun *them*, in a universal sense, and to argue that all, without exception, are to be baptized, whether they become disciples or not. The question, whether the words of the commission are to be limited or not, cannot, therefore, be decided by syntax. The question respecting the subjects of baptism is not "resolved into one of grammar." * Grammar and syntax cannot *alone* settle the question, though, as we have seen, they decidedly favour the notion of limitation. Thus, without any overturning of the principles of language, our case is fairly made out.

* The Sacraments, p. 488.

As to the pronoun, *αὐτοὺς*, being masculine, whereas the antecedent, *ἔθνη*, is neuter; notwithstanding Dr Halley's off-hand way of settling the matter in his foot-note at p. 489,* we consider this peculiarity to be altogether in our favour, and an additional reason for the limitation of the words *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*. We do not deny that the *αὐτοὺς* refers to *ἔθνη*, for we would not gratuitously exhibit grosser ignorance than a school-boy. But let us refer to the rule. We find it very well expressed in the "Observations on Greek Idioms" at the end of a very common school-book—"Neilson's Greek Exercises." It is thus expressed: "A common rule of syntax is, that an adjective shall agree with its substantive in gender and number, as well as in case; but, *by the association of ideas*, we find this rule violated when the persons or things alluded to differ in number or gender from the substantive expressed." Two examples are given, First, *Βρέφος φέροντα τώζον*, where the *βρέφος* (infant) is neuter, but *φέροντα* is masculine, though referring to *βρέφος*, because the infant was a boy, and the mind associated that idea with the neuter, *βρέφος*. The second example is none other, to be sure, than this very sentence from the commission, respecting which our whole dispute is carried on. In this case the idea

* "I suppose no one will object, that *αὐτοὺς*, being masculine, does not refer to *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*, being neuter; as this would betray gross ignorance of the common rule of Greek syntax, known by every school-boy, respecting the reference of pronouns to neuter nouns."

associated, as explained under the rule, is supposed to be that of persons (masculine), thus occasioning, or accounting for the pronoun being masculine. We accept the rule, but in this particular instance we take the liberty to vary its application. The association of ideas in our mind is not that of *persons* generally, but of *disciples* in particular. The verb, μαθητεύσατε very naturally suggests to our mind this association rather than the other; and we account for the pronoun αὐτοὺς being masculine, a different gender from the antecedent, by its alluding, through the association of ideas, to those who were, or might be made disciples. Therefore we resolve it thus: "Disciple all nations"—that is, as many as, in the use of Christian means, is possible; "baptizing them"—that is, the disciples—as many as become such in all nations of the world. Is not this grammatical? Does not the rule of syntax warrant it? No one can deny that it is accurate idiomatically and grammatically. Now this method of construing just brings us to Dr Carson's principle (and he is not often found tripping), viz., "That the antecedent to the pronoun *them* is the word disciples, taken, as grammarians speak, out of the verb, disciple." Dr Halley has taken no notice whatever of Dr Carson's explanation of this grammatical peculiarity. How is this? For Dr Carson's principle is fatal to Dr Halley's theory; and there it remains uncontradicted, unexposed. It makes little difference whether we follow the letter of the rule quoted above, or adopt Dr Carson's explanation. Both are substan-

tially the same; the difference being merely technical. Either method serves to overthrow the indiscriminate theory, and proves that baptism is to be limited to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having now fully examined the language of the commission, as recorded by Matthew, philologically, grammatically, and idiomatically, we find, to say the least, that there is nothing to forbid our understanding it in the sense in which we have explained it: "Go and disciple all nations;" that is, make all the disciples you can in all nations, and, having made these disciples, baptize them "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Then follows a further direction: "Teaching them," (I need not say it is a different word in the Greek, διδάσκοντες) "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" that is, carrying them on beyond first principles, and instructing them in the higher doctrines of the faith of Christ. We believe this to be strictly the meaning of the commission, and that this is the only way of explaining it consistently with the whole analogy of revealed truth.

In the whole of this discussion we have hitherto confined ourselves to the language of the commission as expressed by Matthew. Our arguments, we think, have already amounted to a proof that nothing less than genuine faith can be considered as constituting a suitable qualification or baptism, inasmuch as being a disciple is identical with being a believer. And now we shall find this opinion materially

strengthened by a comparison of Matthew's statement of the commission with that of Mark. Each evangelist gives his own account of the last command of the ascending Saviour; and, as in all other cases, so in this, we ought to avail ourselves of any light that the language of the one may reflect upon that of the other. The words of Mark are: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

Now, what do we most naturally infer from this language in regard to the subjects of baptism? Surely, on a *prima facie* view of the words, we should naturally say that the proper subjects of baptism are believers. Let us look a little carefully into this matter. The language divides itself into two distinct parts. The first of these is, "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." As though our Lord had said, Be this your first concern—implying, unquestionably, the priority of preaching to baptism. For this is not an argument founded upon a mere collocation of words. But here is one whole sentence, a complete, logical sentence, containing a beginning, a middle, and an end, and making complete sense in itself: "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Then follows: "He having believed, and having been baptized, shall be saved." If this construction does not, *at least*, imply the priority of preaching to believing and baptizing, scarcely any form of language could be found to

do so. Our Lord's command is, Go and preach the Gospel—make the people understand the Gospel. He adds, Whoso believes (believes what you preach), and is baptized, shall be saved. This leads us inevitably to associate the notion of baptizing, *not* with preaching, which belongs to the other sentence, but with faith, the result of preaching, which belongs to the same sentence as that in which the notion of being baptized is found.

Dr. Halley says that this form of language specifies not the persons to be baptized, but the persons to be saved. (P. 507.) It does, undoubtedly, specify who will be saved, and this is evidently the prominent idea in the sentence. Why, then, is it that *baptism* should be mentioned in such connexion? *Faith* is mentioned as being the condition of salvation. But why should baptism be mentioned, which has no saving virtue? This *can* be accounted for by admitting that, in apostolic times, a well-known and established connexion existed between faith and baptism. On any other principle, it seems to us inexplicable. If it is affirmed that he who believes shall be saved, it is also affirmed that he who is baptized shall be saved. According to the *grammatical structure* of the sentence, the one is as distinctly affirmed as the other. But the latter would not be true if the baptized were not believers; for none but theologians of the Oxford school will pretend that baptism, in itself, has any virtue to insure salvation. Supposing, for argument's sake, that, in the time of our Lord, faith

and baptism were inseparably connected; supposing baptism to have been a public avowal of faith, as the refusing to be baptized was an evident proof of unbelief; *then* we can account for baptism being associated with salvation. It would most naturally be so associated, as being an evidence of the faith which insured salvation.

Dr. Halley labours to make out that the mention of baptism here in connexion with faith and salvation, is only reconcilable on the principle, that baptism was conceded to all applicants. In this attempt, we think, he signally fails; for, if baptism were indiscriminate, if it were so common a thing as to be given to any body and every body, how could this account for its being introduced in connexion with faith and salvation? It would rather be a reason for *not* mentioning it. He argues, that, “if the apostles commanded all persons indiscriminately to be baptized, the unbaptized were contumacious, like the Pharisees and lawyers, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of John; and that, under these circumstances, the unbaptized could not be saved.” Now, it is observable, that baptism is not even mentioned in the clause that speaks of unbelievers and *condemnation*, but occurs only in that which mentions *believers* and *salvation*. To sustain Dr. Halley’s argument, the words of our Saviour ought to have been, “He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not, and will not be baptized, shall be damned;” and even

then the mention of baptism would be superfluous. However, not one word is said about unbelievers being unbaptized, which Dr. Halley makes so much of; but, on the contrary, believing, being baptized, and being saved, are brought together in one sentence,—all which Dr. Halley casts into the shade. He talks only about the unbaptized, whereas our Lord speaks only about the baptized. Now we should not have complained of this, if Dr. Halley had drawn his conclusion from the case of the unbaptized to that of the baptized, if he had shown how the contumaciousness of some persons in refusing to receive an indiscriminate baptism could account for *such* a baptism being mentioned in connexion with the faith and salvation of others. To us nothing is plainer, than that there would have been a great incongruity in *thus* introducing it, and that no reference to baptism could have been made here, except on the supposition of its being a public avowal of faith in the Redeemer. Dr. Halley's argument, indeed, so far from aiding his cause, seems to us manifestly to help our own. For if, as he argues, the unbaptized were contumacious, and, *therefore*, could not be saved, the converse of this will be equally true, viz., that the baptized, not being contumacious, would be saved; for the notion that some might be baptized voluntarily who were not believers, and would not be saved, manifestly finds no support from the terms of this commission, which mentions only the baptism of believers. The passage speaks a very plain sense to us. Its testimony seems to

be this: Baptism was a public declaration of faith, an act of obedience to Christ. Though having no saving virtue in itself, it was an evidence of faith. It was also an evidence of decision. It was a casting away of shame, an avowing of Christ before men. It was the outward and visible symbol of an indwelling, soul-subduing, world-conquering faith—the great event of life; and, as such, it is most justly and naturally mentioned in association with the faith which insures salvation. On no other hypothesis can it be explained why baptism should be mentioned in this passage. We only remark further, that, from the indirect manner in which baptism is here referred to, we should naturally infer that the uniform connexion of faith and baptism was, in apostolic times, a well known and well understood doctrine—one on which the apostles did not contemplate the possibility of any mistake arising.

Now, this phraseology employed by Mark should, of course, have its weight with us in judging of the import of the language employed by Matthew. The words of Mark seem to us to teach, in plain and unequivocal terms, that faith, and nothing less than faith, is to be considered as constituting a suitable qualification for baptism; and we conclude that Matthew's language (independent of the special arguments which have been adduced), though verbally different, is to be interpreted on similar principles.

We find ourselves, then, in every view of this commission, whether as expressed by the one evangelist

or the other, brought to the inevitable conclusion, that the language, “Teach all nations, baptizing,” so far from giving any sanction to the indiscriminate administration of the ordinance of baptism, agrees with the whole mass of Scripture evidence in proving that *sanctified knowledge*, or *saving faith*, is the only proper and scriptural qualification for baptism. We find analogy and philology beautifully harmonizing in this conclusion—no discordance, no discrepancy.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES.

It may, we are aware, be said, that hitherto we have all along been presuming far too much upon the testimony of analogy; that the practice of the apostles, the Abrahamic covenant, and various passages of Scripture, are against us. We now, therefore, shall proceed to inquire into the first of these subjects, taking up the others in turn. We merely premise that, after the conclusions we have already arrived at, we should not expect to find any thing in the Scriptures hostile to those great principles of reason and morality which lie at the foundation of both natural and revealed religion; and are, we conceive, established beyond all dispute by the analogy of the faith. We do not believe there can be any thing in Scripture to overthrow that common-sense view of things we have taken. Fully convinced of the duty of yielding implicitly to the plain grammatical sense of Scripture; admitting that no pre-conceived opinions must be allowed to influence us in any case, where the meaning of Scripture is obviously opposed to them, we, nevertheless, are not ashamed to own that we come

to the examination of the practice of the apostles, as exemplified in the book that records their acts and doings, with the honest and conscientious conviction that, in every instance we have on record of apostolic baptism, the ordinance was administered in a manner agreeable to those great principles we have been speaking of; which, as we have said, lie at the foundation of all truth and all religion. We believe there are the strongest *à priori* reasons for expecting that the apostles, in every case, baptized on the supposition that the candidates afforded sufficient evidence of being honest and sincere believers. We have no doubt but that this was the principle upon which they baptized—an opinion, as we shall find, *clearly* borne out by *most* of the cases of apostolic baptism mentioned in the Scriptures, and capable of being justified in other cases which may, at first sight, seem to present difficulties and objections.

With these remarks, let us endeavour to ascertain, from the testimony of the Scripture, how the apostles acted in carrying into effect their Lord's commission relative to the ordinance of baptism. We have a notable example, first, in what took place on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of "The Acts of the Apostles." ¶

In this chapter, we have the narrative of the first instance of baptizing by the apostles, after they had received the commission from their Lord. Peter had been preaching a plain and faithful sermon to the Jews who had come to the feast of Pentecost at Jeru-

salem. In this sermon he clearly explained the great elementary principles of the Christian religion, and charged home upon the consciences of his audience the guilt of rejecting and crucifying the Messiah. This sermon produced a most powerful effect upon the minds of the people. "They were pricked" (*κατενύγησαν*)—a most expressive word, denoting the poignancy of their feelings; were thus "pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Now, does it not appear, on reading this statement, that some kind of qualification was considered necessary for the reception of baptism? First, a plain and pointed sermon is preached, which awakens the minds of the people—strikes conviction into their consciences—fills them with the most intense feelings of sorrow—works them up into an agony of distress. Then, to persons in this state of mind and feeling, Peter says, "Repent and be baptized." Conviction, and alarm, and remorse, it would seem, were not accounted by the apostle sufficient qualifications for baptism; but they must repent. Yes! they must exercise true evangelical repentance before he could encourage them to be baptized. And this was equivalent to requiring faith; for repentance flowing from a sense of our guilt, excited by a right view of the character and sufferings of Christ, and the work of man's redemption, must evidently involve the idea of

faith. Then, what was the result of this advice given by Peter? Why, they who gladly received his word were baptized; that is, they who gladly received what he had said concerning the necessity of repenting (implying that they *then* became the subjects of repentance), were baptized, and the same day there were added unto the Church about three thousand souls. Three thousand genuine converts were by baptism united on that very day to the Church of Christ!

Now, Dr. Halley in his statement of this case, labours hard to prove that the command, "Repent and be baptized," does not imply that the repentance was essential to the baptism:—he is determined to get a divorce, and separate the one from the other. Over and over again does he put the case, as we think, in a very unfair way. Thus he speaks of persons not having repented, being exhorted, without delay, to be baptized. He says: "Persons who were not supposed to have repented, and whose sins, therefore, were not thought to have been pardoned, were exhorted indiscriminately to be baptized." He leaves out one part of the exhortation each time. Peter does not simply exhort the Jews to be baptized, but to *repent* and be baptized. Just here lies the whole point of debate. We do maintain that the simple and natural meaning of this command is, that repentance was to precede, or, at least, to accompany baptism. There is no arguing on so plain a case. The best and most critical commentators allow that, in the case of adults, it is here implied, that repentance is an essential

qualification for baptism. Dr. Halley asks, "Would any Baptist minister at this time exhort a multitude of strangers, in the first moments of alarm, to repent and be baptized every one of them?" Certainly he would; but, as times and circumstances are changed, he would not baptize them prematurely; but he would do so directly he had reasonable evidence of repentance having taken place. "Would he," says Dr. Halley, "exhort them, in one breath, to repent and be baptized?" Yes; why not? "That is, would he exhort any, being considered at the time as not having repented, to be baptized?" No; nor did Peter. The apostle did not say to a promiscuous multitude of unconverted, ungodly hearers, Come and be baptized. Nor would any Baptist minister, I may safely take upon myself to say, be ever betrayed into any such egregious absurdity, not even though his audience might all be apparently struck with conviction of sin. To exhort to *repent* and be baptized, is an immensely different thing from exhorting simply to be baptized. Dr. Halley's argument is, that as Peter's audience were commanded "in one breath," to repent and be baptized, therefore, they were baptized without repentance having taken place. Does this follow? Could they not obey both parts of the command at the same time? Is there anything that contradicts our theology in such a supposition? Pricked in their heart, the subjects of bitter remorse on account of their sin, convicted in their consciences, were they not in a most favourable state of mind for being brought to repentance? We

may, indeed, suppose that they were upon the very point of it, that their minds were just in a transition state, and that all that was needed to cause the tear of true evangelical repentance to flow, was just the word of encouragement that Peter gave them. They were escaping from the terrors of the law, and knew not where to go, or what to do. Just then Peter directed them to the promise of the Gospel. They were agonized with the thought, now brought home to their consciences, of the dreadful nature of their sin. Could *they* be pardoned? And Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Oh, what inspiring words! Now hope takes the place of fear; the tumult of their feelings is hushed into a holy calm; their hearts are melted within them; the vehement emotions of anguish give place to the soft and tender feelings of godly sorrow for sin, which the precious promise of pardon has caused spontaneously to flow, and indignation against themselves becomes strangely mingled with love and gratitude to the Redeemer! Three thousand are effectually wrought upon, and brought to repentance on that same day! They attend to, they obey the command of Peter: they repent and are baptized. Is there anything incredible in this? any overstraining of Scripture? Is it not the most natural view of the narrative, and, to every pious heart, by far the most pleasing? May it not be, that the low and comparatively lifeless state of the Church in these torpid times, incapacitates us

from imagining or crediting what might have taken place in the first ages of Christianity? The Church is now, we fear, deficient in faith, and, consequently, has lost much of her power. Though her ministers *call* upon sinners to repent, they do not *look* for their repenting. In a healthy and prosperous state of things, we might expect to witness effects similar to those that were of no uncommon occurrence in the first age of the Church, when Christianity, having come fresh from the hand of its Divine Author, was preached with the earnest and holy eloquence of inspired apostles, the Spirit working mightily with them, and so signally blessing their labours. We shall err greatly, if we estimate the primitive success of the gospel by our present experience and expectations.

As it respects the special events of Pentecost, when our Pædo-baptist friends object, that the three thousand who were then baptized could not all have been sincere; that it is the height of improbability that so large a number should have been savingly converted in so short a space of time; we cannot but remark upon the anomalous position in which they place themselves. For the effect of such an objection is, to impoverish the truths of revelation, to weaken the force of Scripture language, to discredit the power of the Spirit, and to rob of its most distinguishing glory the chief wonder—the most illustrious event of the day of Pentecost. Were not all the occurrences of that wonderful day miraculous? And was not the great, and,

we may say, miraculous, effect of the first apostolic sermon after the ascension of Jesus, though brought about by ordinary means, in harmony with all the rest? Was not this a glorious manifestation of the Spirit's power?—an *earnest* of what that Spirit would do in the Church? The whole narrative shows, as plainly as words can show, that the three thousand who were baptized were genuine converts; nor would we, without the clearest evidence, conclude that they were mere professors, and thus blot out of the Word of God one of the brightest passages it contains.

But supposing that all of these three thousand were real converts, that a work of grace had taken place in their hearts; still, Dr. Halley will object, that it was impossible for Peter to *know*, though they offered themselves for baptism, that they were true believers. For, he says, “There was no waiting for satisfactory evidence; the presentation of the party for baptism was the only evidence which could have been afforded or required. Evangelical repentance,” he says, “is not a thing of which any sinner can assure himself in a few hours—not a thing of which he can furnish satisfactory evidence to others on the same day.” All this I admit; but then, I ask, what can be more natural than to suppose that, on this remarkable day, in the midst of such supernatural scenes, an inspired apostle should have been supernaturally gifted with an intuitive knowledge of what passed in the hearts of his audience? What difficulty is there in the sup-

position that Peter knew by inspiration that all those who, under these extraordinary circumstances, offered themselves for baptism, had been effectually wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, and, though so suddenly, were yet truly converted? On other occasions the apostles might have been left to use their own judgments in discerning character; but that they were capable sometimes of reading the heart is certain, as in the instances of Ananias and Sapphira,* and, in all probability, Peter was on this great occasion thus supernaturally gifted. As for Dr. Halley's objecting to giving converts of an hour's standing testimonials of "the assurance of their being already purified and pardoned," I can only say that he makes a theory which we disown. Baptism *assures* nothing to its subject. It is administered simply on the presumed hope and present belief that the candidate is a true believer. I only remark further, what, indeed, ap-

* Though, for the special purpose of detecting their hypocrisy, Peter was enabled, on this occasion, to read their hearts, it does not follow that he, or the other apostles, were acquainted with their character by inspiration at the time (whenever it might be) that they received them into the Church. On the contrary, it is evident that, till now, they, by their fair appearances and professions, had deceived the apostles and brethren. They were evidently not in their proper place among "the multitude who believed," and who "were of one heart and one soul." Nor can we conceive of a more striking proof that God did not intend his Church to consist of, or be polluted by, such characters, than that awful visitation by which at once their guilt was manifested, and the Church freed from their unlawful intrusion and unhallowed presence.

pears to me alone to carry our cause, that the *result* proved the numbers baptized on this illustrious day to have been worthy subjects of the ordinance—genuine believers; for we read, as the summing up of the whole account, “These all continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” They *continued*—the effect was permanent. Thus, then (say what we may), their actual conversion is a *fact*, and a fact it must ever remain. The sum of all is this:—by the sermon of Peter a very great number were pricked to the heart, and cried out, “Men and brethren, what must we do?” Peter exhorted them to repent and be baptized. Three thousand gladly received the word, and were baptized, and added to the Church; nor did these turn out backsliders: they proved themselves to be sincere Christians; for they continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. To our minds all this does most distinctly prove, that faith or conversion is to be considered an essential qualification for baptism.

Our friends may, indeed, remind us that Peter said, “The promise is to you and your *children*.” True; but what promise? Not of baptism, for surely that cannot be numbered amongst the Scripture *promises*. Something much more worthy of the name of a promise than this, we apprehend, is alluded to. It is quite plain, we think, that the promise which the apostle speaks of, is that of “the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost;” or perhaps the latter

blessing only, as Barnes* understands it. Either exposition settles the question as to the ambiguity of the word "*children*," proving that it cannot mean infants, but must apply to those who are of an age to be capable of exercising faith, and thus obtaining "the remission of sins;" or otherwise, to such as are capable of being the subjects of the Holy Spirit's influences. The word is evidently to be taken in the sense of posterity, and is to be understood conditionally. Altogether, there is nothing in this whole account that in the least impairs those great and important principles which, in the first section, we have shown to be established by the whole analogy of our faith. So far from impairing our principles, it builds a buttress to strengthen them.

Let us now give our attention to the narrative of the preaching of the gospel at Samaria, and the administration of baptism there by Philip; and see whether, from this account, we can gather anything to illustrate the principle upon which the ordinance was administered. Philip, we learn, came down to Samaria in consequence of the great persecution which had broken out at Jerusalem against the Christian Church. His visit to this place was not a hasty one, not merely for a day or a week, but for a considerable

* "For the promise;" "that is, the promise respecting the particular thing of which he was speaking—the influences of the Holy Ghost."—*Barnes, in loc.*

In a long note on the preceding verse he shows, that by these are not meant, here, the extraordinary influences of the Spirit. —*See the Note.*

length of time. Flying from the raging storm of persecution in Judea, he came to seek a quiet asylum elsewhere; and so he settled down for a season amongst the Samaritans. While there, he employed himself in preaching Christ, and much success seems to have attended his evangelical labours. These people had formerly been favoured with the instructions of Jesus himself, and we may reasonably suppose that they were, therefore, the better prepared to receive the gospel message from the preaching of Philip. They attended, we find, with one accord to the things which he spoke, and, moreover, they are said to have believed the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus; and they were baptized, both men and women. Now, there is no reason to doubt but that those who were thus baptized by Philip were true converts and believers. We have not here an account of any sudden excitement. We are not to suppose that these conversions took place in a day. The circumstances, in this case, are different from those of the day of Pentecost. Here was an evangelist stationed among them, and carrying on the good work daily. Instead of multitudes being converted at the same time, we may suppose that the work went on regularly and progressively, but still very prosperously from day to day, and that the Lord, as in the period of time immediately succeeding to the day of Pentecost, "added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

Such being the state of the case, it is quite con-

ceivable that Philip, previously to administering the ordinance of baptism, might have had very good reasons for believing that the applicants were suitable characters to be received into the fellowship of the Church. We are not *obliged* to suppose that they were all baptized instantly and indiscriminately, on their offering themselves for that purpose. However, our cause would suffer nothing even from admitting this; for we believe that the examination of candidates, and testing of character, as a rule, was not in apostolic times necessary.

We must not forget that the early period of the Church was emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. The day of Pentecost was but the commencement of a time of unexampled prosperity, when many thousands of spiritual converts were added to the Church. At that time, we doubt not, the Spirit's presence and influence were *felt* by the apostles and early disciples. They were, we believe, conscious of an unusual power working with them and amongst them. They *felt*, they *knew*, that the work that was going on before their eyes was true and genuine—that it was God's work; and, no doubt, it was “marvellous in their eyes.” Under these circumstances, it would have been almost like a want of faith in God, to have entertained suspicions as to the reality of the conversion of those who were daily and hourly coming forward to avow their faith in the Redeemer. Without resorting to the supposition, that the apostles were inspired to form an immediate and infallible

judgment of the merits of every case (which they certainly were not), we yet may believe that they were so impressed with the conviction, that the Lord was, in an unusual manner, displaying his power and grace among them, that they would, almost as a matter of course, regard the constant accessions to their numbers, without looking minutely into every individual case, as an evidence of the work of the Lord going on around them. Such, indeed, was the fact; for we never can bring ourselves to believe that those numerous additions to the Church, which we read of as distinguishing the primitive age, were, for the most part, accessions of only nominal professors. There is every reason to believe that they consisted of true believers. We say, then, that the apostles, in such a state of things, instead of looking with cold suspicion upon every instance of profession, would, antecedently to evidence of a contrary kind, naturally, and almost necessarily, act upon the presumption of its being sincere. They would feel a generous confidence in the motives and character of those who came forward to avow themselves on the Lord's side—a confidence, as had already been proved in thousands of instances, not misplaced. The work was, in a manner, taken out of their hands. God was visibly working among them. They had only to receive those whom he seemed to be bringing to them. Truly, “the hand of the Lord was with them.” Thus, they might seem to be baptizing indiscriminately, when, in fact, they were gathering in large harvests of re-

deemed souls, justified and saved by faith in the Son of God.

But, in truth, we are doing more than we need do. It is not to be expected that we should explain precisely on what principle the apostles baptized, or that we should tell just in what way Philip the evangelist fulfilled his ministerial duties at Samaria. We are told that the Samaritans *believed* what Philip preached, and that they were baptized, both men and *women*. It is not a little remarkable, however, that here nothing is said about *children* being baptized. If it were customary to baptize them with their parents, this (as men and *women* are mentioned) strikes us as a singular omission. The account altogether, of what was done at Samaria, affords pleasing evidence of the ready and joyful reception of the gospel in that city, and leaves no room to doubt that Philip's preaching was abundantly blessed by the great "Head of the Church," and that those baptized by him were true believers.

There is, however, one particular and well-known case of baptism, which occurred among the others at Samaria, and which presents a difficulty—the case of a man who, we are told, believed and was baptized by Philip, and afterwards proved an impostor. This case is a very peculiar one, and requires looking into fairly and honestly. I refer, of course, to the baptism of Simon Magus. Who and what was he? He was a magician, and he had been in the habit of practising in his magical arts among the people, and, by this

means, had acquired great influence and ascendancy over them. He gave out that he was some great one, and to him all the people gave heed. They called him "The great power of God," using the most extravagant language to express their admiration of him. This was the man who, after hearing Philip preach, professed his faith in the doctrines of the gospel. Now, it was a very remarkable thing for *such* a man to avow himself a believer. For such an act implied the laying aside of his deceitful arts, sacrificing everything in which he boasted, and in which lay the secret of his influence, and giving up his long undisputed power and authority over the people. Of all persons, we should have expected that Simon Magus would have been most hostile to Philip and his doctrines. The mere fact, therefore, of such a man declaring himself a convert would afford strong *prima facie* evidence of his being sincere, and would be a reason amply sufficient to justify Philip in baptizing him. It may, perhaps, be said, on the contrary, that the fact of Simon being so ready to profess his belief should have been the very reason for suspecting him. I think otherwise. Knowing, as we now do, the whole history of the case, it is undoubtedly easy enough for us to see through the designs of the sorcerer. But how could Philip, in the first instance, have had any idea that the man was influenced by self-interest? The whole appearances looked the opposite way. How should Philip be supposed to entertain the shrewd suspicion at that time, that Simon

had any idea of acquiring the art of working miracles and wielding it for his own purposes—that he had any by-ends in view? No doubt the evangelist thought him sincere, and who can say that he had not apparently quite sufficient ground to entertain such an opinion.

But, in fact, the baptism of Simon along with the rest, can be easily accounted for on the other view that we have alluded to. I do not suppose that the apostles and evangelists were in the habit of instituting any minute or particular inquiry into the motives and character of those applying to them for baptism. In those times of the Spirit's power, when the evidences of his gracious work were on every hand such as could not be mistaken, there was no need to do so. Conversions were continually being made on a large scale, and there is every reason to believe, that the multitudes thus professing their faith were spiritual people. If not, the Church of Christ must have been something very different from what we have been accustomed to think it. Instead of being entirely distinct from the world, it must have had a large number of mere worldly characters mixed up with it. Nay, the majority of the Church might have been, and most probably were, on Dr Halley's hypothesis, unconverted persons. A Church of unconverted characters!—it is a contradiction in terms; and there seems no reason to doubt that those large numbers of believers who, at Pentecost, and within a short time after, were gathered into the Church, were

true believers, spiritual converts, born not of water only, but of the Spirit also. The exceptions to this are very rare. I know of none but those of Ananias and Sapphira, and the Samaritan magician of whom we are now speaking. No wonder, then, in the midst of so many genuine believers, that occasionally an unworthy person should be admitted. No wonder, while the same good work was going on so prosperously at Samaria, that one wicked man amongst all the rest should come in without exciting suspicion, and for a time without detection.

But it may be said, If the apostles had simply to do what the Lord seemed to point out, if he thus took the work into his hands, how is it that *he* allowed such characters to be admitted into the Church? We can conceive that such solitary instances may have been permitted to occur for a wise end. Such characters were, of course, when exposed, not allowed to remain in the Church. The judgment of God came down in a most signal manner upon Ananias and Sapphira; and as for Simon, we cannot for a moment suppose that the disciples would associate in fellowship with him, or regard him as one of their number, after his character became known, and he was pronounced to be in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. Therefore, we think that these cases might have been permitted to occur with the design of exhibiting, in a striking manner, that God would not allow such persons to remain in the Church, even if they gained an entrance within its

hallowed enclosure; but that, on detection, they should be immediately cut off. The remarks of Dr Doddridge upon this matter are very much to the purpose. He says, in his "Improvement" on this portion of Scripture, "It may have been intended to teach us that there may be speculative faith where there is no true piety; and," he adds, "if such persons, on the profession of that faith, where nothing appears contrary to it, be admitted to those ordinances by which Christians are distinguished from the rest of mankind, it is an evil in the present state of things unavoidable, and the conduct of Christian ministers and societies in admitting such, will be less displeasing to God than a rigorous severity." That Simon, moreover, was baptized on the presumption of his being a true believer, is, we think, apparent from the narrative. Even Peter, inspired as he was, did not suspect him till he had offered money, saying, "Give me this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." Not till then was he suspected of hypocrisy either by Philip the deacon, or Peter the apostle. But this at once exposed him, and then Peter said, "Because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money, thou hast neither part nor lot in the matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God, for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity;" that is, I *now*, from this thought of thy heart, perceive this. But, previously, this had not been perceived nor imagined, and had

it been, we take the liberty to believe that Simon Magus would never have been baptized. There is nothing, then, in this case, formidable as it may appear at first sight, that is in any way prejudicial to our theory.

Our Pædo-baptist friends may, perhaps, say that all our reasoning upon this difficult case has been merely hypothetical, and that it is impossible for us to *prove* that Philip baptized Simon on the presumption of his being a believer. To this objection we need only say, that if we cannot absolutely prove our view of the matter, most assuredly Pædo-baptists cannot prove the contrary. In these uncertain cases, therefore, all we can do is to fall back upon first principles. The views which our friends take of this case contradict those principles, while the view which we have proposed is entirely in harmony with them. Let it be granted that we cannot produce mathematical demonstration—we can propose a solution of the difficulty, attended with the highest degree of probability; and being the only view that analogy sanctions, it seems to us a moral certainty that it is the only defensible, the only true one; and there we rest our cause.

And now, we cannot but remark upon this case of Simon Magus, that if it were possible for inspired apostles to be deceived as to the character of candidates for baptism, it surely can be no matter of surprise that uninspired men in the present day, who act upon the principle of administering the ordinance of

baptism only to believers, should sometimes find themselves to have formed mistaken judgments, and to have baptized unworthy subjects. This is no more than what would naturally be expected, no more than what must sometimes, in the present imperfect state of things, almost inevitably occur. Moreover, times and circumstances being changed, the principle of forming a judgment of the character and suitability of candidates must likewise be changed. In apostolic times, as I think has been shown, there was in most cases but little need to hesitate about baptizing any who offered themselves. In the first flourishing age of the Church, the possibility of hypocrisy was scarcely thought of; and, subsequently, when violent persecution arose against the disciples, the mere profession of Christianity would, on that ground, be justly considered a sufficient guarantee for sincerity. But now, things are different. We have, alas! too little evidence of the Spirit's presence with us,—no Pentecostal or post-Pentecostal effusions of his divine influences, nor does it cost anything now to make a profession of religion; it is rather accounted respectable and creditable to do so. Time, therefore, must now be allowed to test character. A hasty and inconsiderate administration of the ordinance of baptism can by no means be justified. Every reasonable means must be used, which the spiritual wisdom of the Church can employ, to satisfy itself of the genuineness and sincerity of those who seek admission into its holy communion by baptism. Still, using all Christian

and prudential means, it may *sometimes* happen that unbelievers, by a wrong application of the ordinance of baptism, may be admitted to the Church.

Now, Dr Halley endeavours to fasten an inconsistency upon us, as admitting baptism performed under such circumstances to be valid, the baptized party not being a believer. We cannot but think that the Doctor here treats us ungenerously; for, whatever may be the opinions and practices of Baptists in special and difficult cases, he knows that the *principle* upon which they act remains unchanged. But what is meant by baptism being considered valid, though administered to an unbeliever? Does Dr Halley suppose, that in a case in which a baptized individual turns out a hypocrite, and remains ever after a manifest unbeliever, baptism would be considered valid as administered to *such* a character? This were manifestly absurd. In such an instance, the ordinance would be plainly prostituted, the sin lying at the door of the baptized unbeliever; that is, supposing all proper care and prudence had been previously used by the minister and officers of the Church. But if we confine the validity to those cases in which the individual baptized, relapsing subsequently into sin and going back into the world for a time, becomes at length reclaimed, and returns with penitence and deep humiliation to Jesus, seeking re-admission to the privileges of Church communion, there may not be so much, or, indeed, *any* inconsistency in viewing the original administration as valid. In instances of this

kind, there would be good reason for believing that the individual was really sincere at the time of being baptized, though left afterwards to fall away. Charity at least, would require us to form such a judgment. In any view, we do not see that we are fairly open to the charge of inconsistency. We act upon a definite principle, which we consider plainly laid down in the Word of God; but if that Word is silent about particular cases that may possibly occur, if it has given us no rule for our direction respecting such cases, then we must use the best judgment we possess in dealing with them. At all events, we must not give up the rule because we cannot always carry it out infallibly. We must not make a stumbling-block of an occasional difficulty.

The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch next claims our consideration. Here, as in other cases, Pædobaptists contend that we have no evidence that baptism was administered on the principle of saving faith being a pre-requisite—that there is nothing in the circumstances to warrant the supposition that this Ethiopian was converted in heart. Dr Halley argues that he had but very little knowledge, being quite unacquainted with the prophecy that he was reading, and that, notwithstanding this, Philip unhesitatingly baptized him on his first acquaintance, and after a very short interview. “We ascertain from the narrative,” says the Doctor, “that a stranger, utterly ignorant of the gospel, was baptized after a few hours’ instruction—a fact explicable only upon the theory that

baptism was readily administered to all who desired it." * Now we admit that the treasurer's mind was in great uncertainty and ignorance concerning the prophecies when Philip joined him; and that very soon after this, and also on a very short acquaintance, Philip baptized him. (We can do no other than admit facts.) Still, we think there is good and reasonable evidence that, in so short a space of time, he became a true believer, and was in that character baptized, and that Philip, in baptizing him, regarded him as a believer. We give up the disputed passage. (Acts viii. 37.) This, if genuine, would, of course, settle the question at once; but, setting that aside as spurious, it appears to us, from the statement of the case itself, that there is, to say the least, the highest probability of the Ethiopian treasurer having become a convert and a believer previous to his baptism. Extraordinary instances of conversion, as we have already seen, and as will be seen again when we come to speak of Saul of Tarsus, were by no means uncommon in those days; and it is very evident that there was a special interposition of the Divine Being in this particular instance. A celestial visitant came to Philip, and instructed him to go to the very place where this Ethiopian was travelling; and then, again, by some supernatural intimation, some inward and spiritual impulse, the divine prompting of which he could not misunderstand, he was directed to go and actually join himself to the chariot in which the

* The Sacraments, p. 518.

Ethiopian was riding. It would seem as though the Spirit of God had some special design in all this, and it were indeed very strange if that design should be nothing more than merely to make a proselyte. Can we conceive that such an object as this would be worthy of the mission of an angel and of the intervention of the Spirit of God? At least, is it not far, very far more reasonable, to suppose that a nobler object was contemplated? Would not the very circumstances of the case naturally lead us to think that it was the intention of the Spirit of God to convert this Ethiopian, and make him a chosen vessel to carry the blessed gospel to that distant land whither he was returning, and use him as an instrument of great good in his own country? Oh, yes! and, as it was the Spirit that sent Philip to this man of Ethiopia, we doubt not that there was a work of the Spirit going on in his heart at that very time. It is also not a little remarkable that he should have been reading the Scriptures as he journeyed, evidencing an inquiring mind, and, it would seem, a prepared state of heart for receiving instruction. Then we read that Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture which he was reading, and preached unto him Jesus. His heart seems to have been prepared to receive the truth of the gospel; and, as Philip preached Christ to him, his mind opened and embraced the saving truth, and there appears to be not the shadow of a doubt but that the Spirit applied that truth at that precise time to his heart; nor

can we conceive, on a view of the whole account, of any reason for holding a contrary opinion. We stand in no need of the disputed text. We can do very well without it. Whether it be genuine Scripture or not, we doubt not it contains a true Scripture sentiment. The way in which the case is introduced, and the whole aspect that it presents, convinces us that Candace's treasurer became, under the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, a true believer, and was baptized as such. The conclusion of the account, moreover, favours the same opinion, in which we are informed that the Spirit caught away Philip (the whole bears the stamp of something special and supernatural), and that the eunuch saw him no more. It is added, "And he went on his way rejoicing." Rejoicing! For what? merely because he had gained some new views concerning the prophecies? If this were all, would the case have been worth relating? He rejoiced because he felt the power of the gospel, and experienced its blessedness in his own heart. He rejoiced as a believer.

We must now direct our attention to the baptism of Saul of Tarsus. The Scripture narrative of this case, in those parts which are of the most material importance, appears to us, like the others we have examined, to be very simple and intelligible, and quite to favour our cause. The supernatural appearance of the Lord to Saul on the road to Damascus—his being struck to the ground with awe—hearing the voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why perse-

cutest thou me?"—his ready submissiveness and humility, as manifested in his inquiry, "Who art thou, Lord? what wilt thou have me to do?"—the fact of his being arrested in the execution of his commission against the disciples of Jesus, and abandoning his bloody designs—the change which took place in him from that very time—his becoming a praying man;—all these circumstances we have been accustomed to regard as affording undoubted evidence of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. In fact, we have hitherto always considered that Paul was miraculously, but truly, converted on the way to Damascus, and that the fact of his becoming a praying man, in particular, afforded unquestionable evidence of the genuineness of his conversion. And will Dr Halley, notwithstanding all this, seriously deny the reality of Paul's having been converted previous to his baptism? Can he account for this fiery zealot being changed all at once into a praying man on any other principle than that of some great and marvellous change having taken place in him? To us, it seems that all controversy is, or ought to be, precluded by the indisputable significancy of the circumstances related. It may, indeed, be true that there is some obscurity and difficulty connected with the phrase, "Wash away thy sins;" but this cannot alter the facts of the case. We must interpret the doubtful by the plain and the certain, or at least not in such a way as to contradict that which is clear and unambiguous. Will Dr Halley say this is begging the question? Well, per-

haps it is, for we certainly have no right to doubt but that all the circumstances of this narrative seem plain and consistent to Dr Halley, in *his* view of it. To cast imputations of dishonesty against an opponent, *has* been the too common way of controversial pugilism; and the consequence is, that piety has suffered infinitely more than truth has gained. Let us hope that the days of unchristian disputation and uncharitable insinuation are gone by, only to be remembered with sorrow. We will not breathe a suspicion of Dr Halley's honesty and conscientiousness. We give him full credit for integrity, and can only say, that it is impossible for us to see the matter as he does. All that is related seems perfectly plain to us; and, as in viewing the whole matter, there seems no room for a misunderstanding, we argue that the only phrase around which any little obscurity seems to hang, must be brought into the clear day-light of the context for illustration. Dr Halley scarcely notices those circumstances which appear to us to decide the question, while we regret to find him mystifying what we think a plain statement, by dwelling almost exclusively upon one doubtful sentence.

Now, though we do not consider that the *onus probandi* lies upon us, we have no objection to give our opinion of the meaning of this disputed language. Dr Halley considers that it signifies the forgiveness of sin, or rather the obtaining of the forgiveness of sin; and he argues that, as Ananias commands Paul

to be baptized, and wash away his sins, he had not obtained forgiveness previous to his baptism. (P. 520.) Now, let us adopt Dr Halley's interpretation. We have no objection to abide by it. We think it may be the right one. To wash away one's sins signifies to obtain the forgiveness of sins. What then? Why, the command, "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins," implies, at least, that obtaining forgiveness must be understood as in some way associated with baptism. But how can any one wash away his own sins? how can a sinner obtain the forgiveness of sin? Surely there is but one way, and that is conditionally—by faith. As, therefore, obtaining forgiveness is, by the very form of language employed, associated with baptism, so also must that faith, without which forgiveness cannot be obtained, be understood to be associated with baptism. Dr Halley gains nothing by his argument, unless he can prove that Paul did not obtain forgiveness till *after* he was baptized. This, we venture to say, he can never do; for surely the Doctor himself will admit, that the very form of the exhortation implies, that the baptizing and the washing away of sin were to be contemporaneous. Without, therefore, disputing whether faith existed before baptism, it is enough for us to know that it existed at the time of baptism, and, consequently, that Paul was baptized as a believer.

The following explanations may set this matter in a still clearer light. Paul, we consider, was really converted in heart, by a special act of divine grace,

when the Lord met him on his journey to Damascus. But he had not, at that time, a clear view of the way of forgiveness through Christ. God, who knew his heart, may, perhaps, be considered to have forgiven him, though he himself might not yet have obtained a sense of that forgiveness. Whether pardon may, in any special and peculiar cases, be considered as being granted before evangelical faith has been exercised, is a point of casuistry which we need not enter upon here. But, be that how it may, assuredly no *sense* of forgiveness can be experienced by the sinner himself until he views the Saviour believingly, and sees the way of mercy through him. Now, we consider that the mind of Paul was in a prepared state to receive the good news of pardon and salvation, so soon as it should be made known. He only wanted to have Christ revealed, as able to save “the chief of sinners,” in order to his immediately embracing him. He waited only for the word of encouragement and hope to enkindle his faith, and lead him to trust in the Saviour. Under these circumstances, faith would take place immediately upon the word of promise being given. Just so it was, we can very well suppose. Paul was directed to go to Damascus, where it should be told him what he was to do—the very thing he wanted to know. He goes into the city; and, by divine direction, Ananias comes to the house where he was lodging. He says to Paul, after having first restored his sight, “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee *that thou shouldst know his will*, and

see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be a witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." Then immediately he inquires, "Why tarriest thou?" Why dost thou not at once own thyself a convert—a disciple? As though he had said, I am aware of the change that has taken place in thee—that thou seest the error of thy past course, that thou art now a convinced sinner: arise, therefore, at once, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord, for no delay is needed. The very exhortation, "Wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord," would come, we may suppose, as a sweet word of promise to the soul of the new but yet doubting convert. It was just what, in his state of mind, humbled, subdued, and bowed down with a sense of sin, he needed. Yes, here was an implied promise of mercy; the first ray of hope let into his dark and troubled mind since the solemn and astounding scenes he had witnessed but a short time before. His sins might be washed away—they might be forgiven by his calling upon the name of the Lord, and, as is implied, trusting in him. *Now*, if not before, a believing view of Jesus as a Saviour darts into his soul, and he obtains forgiveness, and the happy *realization* of this invaluable blessing, bringing peace to his soul. He obeys the command without a moment's hesitation. He is baptized as a believer, and washes away his sins. I only remark further, that if Paul were not a believer at the time of his baptism, he was so,

unquestionably, immediately after; for we read that *straightway* he preached Christ in the synagogues—that he is the Son of God. (Acts ix. 20.) Taking this into consideration, along with all the other circumstances of the case, it does seem like a mere refining upon Scripture, to deny that Paul was a believer when he was baptized.

It will be understood that we do not rest our cause upon this interpretation of the “washing away of sin.” Whatever this doubtful clause may mean, and independent of it altogether, we firmly hold to the opinion, that Paul was a converted man before his baptism; and, after all, we are by no means sure he was not a believer before the hour in which he was baptized. The very manner in which Ananias first addressed him, seems almost as if he took it for granted that he was such, and had already embraced the Saviour: “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee;” would he have said this if he had not been convinced that Paul was already an evangelical convert? Moreover, he does not exhort him, as in other cases was usual, to repent or to believe; and why should he not have done this, unless he were aware, by divine intimation, that he *had* repented, and *did* believe *already*. If we view the matter in this light, we must then understand the command, “Wash away thy sins,” as Dr Carson and others have done, in an emblematical sense; and we are free to confess that we see nothing unreasonable in so taking it. We do not see anything absurd even in Dr Halley’s own

way of representing this theory, though, he says, to state it appears to him to confute it: "Be baptized, and perform a figurative representation of the washing away of sin." We hold that baptism is a figurative representation of washing away of sin, and that every believer, voluntarily acceding to baptism, does, *in point of fact*, perform this figurative representation. If so, could there be any thing unreasonable in exhorting to perform it? But Dr Halley says, "The exhortation is, according to this comment, merely an expletive, as it is included in the previous command, "Be baptized." We do not view it so. It is rather a specifying of the particular thing signified by baptism. Paul might not have understood this, or, his case being a very peculiar one—feeling himself, as he tells us he did, to be "the chief of sinners"—faith being yet weak, he might have needed, for further encouragement and comfort, to have his mind specially directed to the symbolical signification of baptism. Just as the bread and the wine in the Lord's supper are designed, through our senses, to bring to our remembrance the body and blood of Christ, and his atonement for sin; so the water in baptism is designed, sacramentally, to fix our thoughts upon the blessed truth of the spiritual washing away of sin. We view the second clause of this exhortation, not as an *expletive*, but rather as an *exposition* of the first. Be baptized, and thus, in figure, wash away thy sins; remember for thy encouragement, in the very act of being baptized, the sacramental meaning of the ordinance,

viz., that as water cleanses and purifies the body, so the Holy Spirit, through faith, cleanses from all sin.

Having given these two views of the only doubtful sentence in the whole narrative, we now leave our readers to choose between them, or adopt any other, if they please. Whatever be the particular way of explaining this phrase (which, after all, does not appear to present much difficulty) we never can persuade ourselves that Paul was not a true convert and a true believer at the time of his baptism, and that this glorious fact was not by some means satisfactorily known by his baptizer.

Dr Halley makes short work of Cornelius, and his family and friends. In replying to him, we will imitate his brevity, and be as concise as possible. We see much the same characteristics in this as in all the other examples we have noticed. Cornelius was a *devout** man, and onethat† *feared God with all his house*, gave much

* “A devout man.”—“Pious, or one who maintained the worship of God.” (Barnes *in loco*.) This is further explained in his note on Acts ii. 5, where we have the following observations:—“Devout men,” (ἀνδρες εὐλαβεῖς.)—“Literally, men of cautious and circumspect lives, who lived in a prudent manner. The term is applied to men who were cautious about offending God—who were careful to observe his commandments. It hence is a general expression to denote pious or religious men. Luke ii. 25: “And the same man (Simeon) was just and devout.” Acts viii. 2: “And devout men carried Stephen to his burial,” &c.

† “Feared God.”—“This is often a designation of piety. In Acts ix. 31, we read the *Churches* had rest, and were edified and walked in the fear of the Lord.” (See Barnes *in loco*.)

alms to the people, and *prayed to God always*. His prayers and his alms, moreover, were acceptable to God; for they came up as a memorial before Him. The testimony of the two servants (a part of the house that feared God) and of the *devout* soldier, who were sent for Peter, when they found him, was, that Cornelius was “a just man, one that feared God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews.” Cornelius himself, after making his statement to Peter concerning the appearance of the angel to him, and of his immediately sending for Peter, adds, “And thou hast well done that thou art come. Now, therefore, we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter (we are told) opened his mouth and said, Of a truth, I see that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that *feareth* him and *worketh righteousness*, is *accepted with him*.” Now all this quite satisfies our minds as to the character of Cornelius and his family. But notice the last sentiment in particular: “In every nation he that *feareth* God and *worketh righteousness* is accepted with him.” This must denote acceptance in some *special sense*; for otherwise, as all the Gentiles, without exception, were to be admitted to the common blessings of the gospel, why should marks of character be mentioned as the ground of acceptance? It will not be disputed that this sentiment, though expressed in a general form, has a particular reference to Cornelius and his family, and kinsmen and friends; that it implies that they were persons who

feared God, wrought righteousness, and were accepted of him. These persons, then, were accepted of God, not as *all* the Gentiles were, but as pious, converted, God-fearing characters. Nor is it too much to say that they were Christians and believers; for Peter, addressing them, says, "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—that word, I say, *ye know*." By some means they had already become acquainted with the gospel of Jesus Christ. All they wanted was to be certified of *their* title to its privileges. We remark, further, that this was another very special instance of divine interposition. The visions preceding it, the appearance of the angel, the Spirit signifying to Peter that three men were seeking him—all betoken something more than ordinary. This was the first authorized recognition of the Gentiles. And do not the circumstances seem altogether to favour the belief, that as the numbers converted on the day of Pentecost were the first-fruits of the Jews, then first avowedly admitted into the Christian Church, so, on this occasion, Cornelius and his family, and kinsmen and near friends, were, through the special work of the Spirit in their hearts, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, gathered into the same Church, where the distinction between Jew and Gentile was henceforth to be unknown? It will be said, this is mere speculation. To us, however, it appears a very probable view of the case, and it saves our principles, being consistent with all truth and according with the analogy of the faith. There,

fore, we have no hesitation in adopting it as our view of the matter.

In reference to the Holy Ghost having fallen upon them, Dr Halley argues, that this was not designed to qualify them for baptism, as the Jews were baptized on the day of Pentecost previous to the descent of the Holy Ghost. We do not, indeed, say that it *was* designed to qualify them for baptism; but we *do* say that the bestowment of such an illustrious gift tended to make their qualification so much the more apparent. Baptism was a Christian ordinance. It had been a matter of doubt with the Jews whether Gentiles were to participate in Christian privileges. The state of the heart, though they might be converts to the Christian faith, and even believers, might not remove the scruples that were entertained. But the visible outpouring of the Spirit upon them in his extraordinary influences, might well be supposed to silence every objection. Therefore, in this first admission of the Gentiles to the Christian Church, Peter naturally makes his appeal to this manifest work of God. It may have been taken for granted, that in other respects these devout Gentiles were qualified for baptism, and now God openly, as it were, declared his approbation of them. Could any of the brethren from Joppa, who had accompanied Peter, and were present on this occasion, doubt of the Gentiles being admitted to equal privileges with the Jews in the Christian Church, after this signal evidence of God's approval? "Can

any forbid water," says Peter, "that these"—these pious, God-fearing Gentiles—"should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?" "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord;" not *because* they had received the Holy Ghost, but because they were, in other respects, fully qualified for the ordinance. And, moreover, though the endowments of the Holy Ghost did not in themselves qualify for baptism, yet, by evidencing *character*, they proved them to be suitable subjects; for in all the instances that are related concerning the bestowment of spiritual gifts, we find they were conferred only upon the Church. There is not the least evidence of their having ever been bestowed upon ungodly and unconverted persons. On the day of Pentecost, it was the apostles who possessed these gifts. In the account we have of them, in 2 Cor xii., they were evidently confined to the Church, though the manifestation of them was mingled with much infirmity of those possessing them. Our Lord, prophesying concerning these things, says, "These signs shall follow *them that believe*, They shall speak with new tongues." Now all this is most conclusive as to the character of these Gentiles. The very fact of the Holy Ghost falling upon them all, proves that they were good men. We do not pretend to say that this qualified them for baptism; but we do say that it proved they were already qualified—proved that they belonged to that class of people upon whom alone

spiritual gifts were bestowed—proved that they were believers.

The baptism of Lydia and the Philippian jailer, with their families, next requires a few words of explanation. In regard to the character of Lydia herself, one would think there can be no mistake; for we are told that she worshipped God. And what language could be more significant than what follows? "*Whose heart the Lord opened*, that she attended unto the things that were spoken by Paul." Indeed, though Dr Halley talks, as usual, of Lydia being baptized by the river side before she returned to her house, having then, for the first time in her life, heard the gospel, yet he himself afterwards admits that she was a believer; that is, he admits that an individual on hearing the word for the first time in her life, became a believer. We here, then, have Dr Halley agreeing with us, that Lydia was baptized as a believer. But what shall we say concerning her household? "Of her family," says Dr Halley, "we know nothing." We certainly know nothing of them, except indirectly, from being told that they were baptized with her. But, as in all other cases we have found good evidence that those who were baptized were believers, we naturally surmise, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the family of Lydia were believers. Moreover, as there is nothing in the narrative to forbid the supposition of their being believers, and as this is the only view of the case that is allowed us by analogy, which happily sheds its not uncertain light upon all such little obscurities and

mysteries as these, we conclude without hesitation that the household of Lydia, as well as its head, had been led to embrace the faith of the gospel. We, therefore, do not need the reflected light afforded by the allusion made to the *brethren* who were found in the house of Lydia, and whom Paul and Silas *comforted* previously to their departure. Amongst these, however, we believe were included Lydia's sons or servants, who, we doubt not, as they were baptized with her, believed also as she did.

The account of the baptism of the jailer and his family perfectly agrees with all the rest. The earthquake, and the circumstances arising out of it, were the means of awakening the mind of the jailer. He is about to kill himself, when Paul calls out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The calm composure of Paul under these appalling circumstances, and the fact of his taking no advantage of the opportunity to escape, seems instantly to have made a deep impression upon the mind of this man. He was struck, we may suppose, with the consciousness of divine interposition; he felt that God was in *this*, and a conviction of sin was thus brought home to his own conscience. He brings these servants of the most high God out of the prison, and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" This must have been a cry of anxious concern about his soul, for the personal danger was past. They reply, accordingly, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Then we find them

preaching the word of the Lord unto him, and to all that were in his house; and then we are told that he is baptized, he and all his, straightway, and that he and his house all believe and rejoice together. Dr Halley manages very cleverly to give a different colouring to this plain story, by saying, "As to the jailer, we do not know that he was a believer when he was baptized. He was not a believer a short time before—he was a believer a short time afterwards; but whether his baptism preceded his belief, or his belief his baptism, we do not know. All I know is, that his baptism with his household is mentioned first, and his believing with his house is reported afterwards in the sacred narrative." Now, leaving the narrative to speak for itself, we remark, that the whole of these occurrences did not occupy more than an hour or two. And if the jailer and his family believed within an hour (probably less) after their baptism, it is a most peculiar refining of the matter to argue (a thing which Dr Halley is too cautious to do openly) that they did not believe at the time of their baptism. We, for our part, are quite satisfied with bringing faith and baptism into so near juxtaposition as this. In arguing upon the language of Peter on the day of Pentecost, Dr Halley's object is to show that the command, "Repent and be baptized," could not have been given on the supposition of repentance *then* taking place; and yet here he allows that both Lydia and the jailer were believers within an hour of their baptism, although they did

not know so much of the gospel as the Jews who were converted by the preaching of Peter. They were now only hearing it for the first time in their lives. However, let that pass, which is beside our present argument. As the jailer and his family had the gospel preached to them, and were baptized and believed, and all in a very short space of time—a small part of the night—we think we are not presuming, or taking too much for granted, in satisfying ourselves that his family, when baptized, was a believing family.

Respecting the baptism of households, as it bears upon the case of infants, we must say a few words. It is usual to argue that surely there must have been children, and it may be infants, in some of these families; and, as it is said the families were baptized, the infants would, as a matter of course, be included. Now, we need only follow Dr Carson in answering this argument. We are willing to allow that there might have been children in all the families mentioned in Scripture as having been baptized. Does it then follow that these children were baptized with the others? We will appeal to an authority which we know will be respected by our Pædo-baptist friends, to explain this difficulty. Dr Wardlaw, in referring to the Scripture statements respecting households, viz., “That the apostles spoke the Word of God to all that were in the house,” uses these words: “Such *general expressions* are perfectly common both in conversation and in writing. When we ascribe to a *family* anything of which infants are universally understood to

be incapable, we never think of making a formal exception of them.” * This is a two-edged sword—verily it cuts both ways. It suits our purpose quite as well as Dr Wardlaw’s. The whole analogy of Scripture truth shows that *faith* is essential for baptism. It is proved, *directly*, by the commission, and it is confirmed by the practice of the apostles—it is proved, *inferentially*, from the fact to come before us in the next chapter—that the only persons now recognised as in covenant with God are the believing children of Abraham. Infants, being incapable of faith, are therefore incapable of receiving baptism. Granting, then, that there were children in the baptized households, no formal exception of them was necessary when it was said such and such houses were baptized. As children could not believe, it would be understood, as a matter of course, that they were excepted, and not baptized. However, infant baptism can never be *proved* from the baptism of households, as the mere presumption of there having been infants in those families is ground far too slender whereon to found an argument.

It only remains for us now to advert to the twelve disciples of Apollos, who were re-baptized by Paul at Ephesus. This case proves unquestionably, that there must have been an essential difference between John’s baptism and Christian baptism.† Dr Halley

* Dissertation on Infant Baptism, third edition, p. 125.

† In his recent work, in reply to Mr Stowel and Dr Wardlaw, Dr Halley, in further explanation of his views of the case of the

endeavours, in a laboured argument, to evade the conclusion, but evidently manifests a mistrust of his own reasoning. The merits of his argument upon this subject in his fourth lecture, are well summed up in a review of "The Sacraments," which will be found in the "Eclectic Review" for February 1845. The reviewer says, alluding to Dr Halley's reasons for the two baptisms being identical, "To us they appear to result in this, that John's baptism was valid if administered before our Lord's death, but not if administered after that event. What is this but to say, that John's baptism was valid for his own, but not for the Christian dispensation? than which we can

twelve Ephesian disciples, argues that it is highly probable they were baptized by Apollos *after* the death of Christ; that *then* John's baptism had lost its authority, that consequently their baptism was destitute of divine sanction, and that this was the ground of their re-baptism. Now, supposing that the baptism of these disciples was administered according to the formula of John's baptism *after* the death of Christ, and admitting that this would be a reason for their re-baptism, we still think, even in that case, that the principal reason would be the essential difference of the two baptisms. Dr Halley himself admits that there may have been a difference between them, and to us it certainly appears much more reasonable to account for this instance of re-baptism on that ground, than on that of the twelve disciples alluded to having unconsciously become the subjects of a rite that had ceased to receive the sanction of divine authority. Moreover, were there not something more than an *unimportant* difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism, something more than a mere form of words, we cannot understand how the divine sanction should be withdrawn from the one and given exclusively to the other; or, at least, why the mere want of authority in an unimportant matter should be made the sole ground of re-baptism.

require no more evidence that his baptism was not Christian baptism." Wherein, then, consisted the difference? To answer this question is a matter of no great difficulty. John's baptism was adapted to the intermediate dispensation, which, as we have argued under Chapter I., extended from his time to the death of Christ; Christian baptism was adapted to that new and spiritual dispensation which properly commenced with the death and resurrection of Jesus. John's baptism corresponded with the doctrine he taught—for, as Dr Halley admits, the baptism of John and the doctrine of John are convertible terms; Christian baptism, in like manner, corresponded with the doctrine which the apostles taught after the true nature of Christianity was fully developed. The baptism of John made no discrimination of character requisite in order to its administration; Christian baptism, we may fairly conclude, would invite none to come and receive it but such as fully embraced the apostles' doctrines, and truly believed in Jesus. As it regards the twelve men whom Paul met with at Ephesus, it seems doubtful whether we are to consider them as disciples of Apollos, not having yet embraced the true Christian faith, or whether we are to regard them as already disciples of Christ, though not baptized in his name. Barnes takes the former view, and he thus explains his opinions. He says: "Apollos had correct views of the Messiah to come—views which he had derived from the study of the Old Testament. He was expecting a Saviour that should be

humble, obscure, and a sacrifice, in opposition to the prevailing notions of the Jews—he was endeavouring to instruct and reform his countrymen. John preached repentance, and baptized with reference to Him that was to come after him; and this doctrine Apollos seems to have embraced.” (Note on ch. xviii. 25.) In his comment on the word “*disciples*,” he says, “They were evidently in the same situation as Apollos.” Then, on the next verse, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost?” he intimates that the apostle’s inquiry had reference to “the *extraordinary* effusions of the Holy Ghost.” “Paul,” says he, “would not doubt that, if they had believed, they had received the *ordinary* converting influences of the Holy Spirit; for it was one of his favourite doctrines that the Holy Spirit renews the heart.” Once more (for we cannot resist the temptation, though our quotations are rather extended): “They were just in the state of mind that they were willing to embrace the doctrine when it was proclaimed to them; thus showing that they were really under the influence of the Holy Spirit. God may often produce important changes in the hearts and lives of sinners, even when they have no clear and systematic views of religious doctrines.” If this view of the character of these twelve disciples be correct, then it is evident that they were suitable subjects, according to our view, for the Christian ordinance of baptism, and that they were undoubtedly baptized as genuine believers in the name of the Lord. Moreover, “The Holy Ghost came on

them," and they spake with tongues, and prophesied; exercising gifts, which, as we have said before, were never bestowed upon manifest unbelievers, but were imparted only to those who, there was good reason to suppose, were real Christians, and who ostensibly belonged to the Church, for the edification of which they were given. This alone is sufficient testimony as to their character.

Dr Wardlaw, however, takes a different view of this case, and which, perhaps, is preferable to the one given by Mr Barnes. He remarks, that the term "disciple," in the Book of the Acts, is never used except in the sense of a believer in Jesus. Consequently, he argues that at some time subsequently to their having been baptized by Apollos, or some one else, into John's baptism, the twelve persons here spoken of became Christians; that when Paul found them, they had received and believed the truth concerning Jesus, but on their thus believing had not been baptized into the name of Christ—had not received *Christian* baptism. He argues, that, on believing in Christ, they ought to have been re-baptized into the faith of Christ; but probably might not have been aware that this was necessary. Paul coming and finding them in this predicament, explained to them the duty of being baptized in the name of Christ, as they were now believers in him; and accordingly, they forthwith received, without hesitation, the ordinance of Christian baptism. Now, this certainly appears a very probable view of the matter,

and it distinctly marks out the points of difference between John's baptism and Christian baptism, and that, too, entirely in agreement with the view we have given above. The moral evidence which it affords, in the case under examination, seems to amount to a moral certainty that higher qualifications were demanded for Christian baptism than for John's baptism, and that faith in Christ was the proper condition of the former.

We have now noticed all the instances of baptism recorded in "The Acts of the Apostles," and having thus done, leave it to the candid and intelligent reader to say whether, on the whole view of the matter, the balance of evidence preponderates in favour of the theory, that *no* qualification is requisite for baptism; or of that which requires repentance and faith in those who offer themselves as candidates for the ordinance. We are quite aware how easy a thing it is to start objections to some of the views and explanations we have given; but the difficulties attendant upon the opposite theory, and the objections lying against it, appear to us far greater. Those objections which may be alleged against the theory which we adopt, seem to us to admit of easy explanation (whether the method of explaining them which we have proposed be the best that could be offered, we will not say); while those which pertain to the opposite view, appear to us to shake the very foundations of our holy faith, and to unsettle the great principles of morality and religion. We think, indeed,

that the view we have taken of the different cases which have come under our notice is the most natural, and, taking all the facts and circumstances into consideration, is best supported and borne out by the narrative. Let the evidence on either side be weighed in the balance of a thoughtful and conscientious mind.

CHAPTER III.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

WRITERS on both sides of the baptismal controversy, have often charged each other with the inconsistency of a want of harmony and agreement in their reasonings, and the unfairness of continually changing the principle of argumentation, and shifting the ground of attack. But why should it be deemed necessary to pursue invariably the same line of reasoning, and no other? Why should it be deemed obligatory to move for ever in the same track, without the least deviation? Is it a point of honour in this controversy never to take up a new position, even when an advantage can be clearly gained by so doing? Why should we be expected to adhere always to the same modes of thinking? Let mind be free, whatever be the issue, and let us hope we shall come to the truth at last.

The opinions of Drs Owen and Wardlaw, similar in the most material points, have long had many supporters, and met with much favour among Pædobaptists; but now, Dr Halley comes forward as an objector to each of these divines, avowing a want of confidence in their respective theories, and advocating

a view which (to use his own words in speaking of it in contrast with that of Dr Wardlaw), “has a wider range, and is the more Pædo-baptistical of the two.” The distinguishing feature of Dr Wardlaw’s theory is, that children were included in the covenant which God made with Abraham, by virtue of *their relation to their parents*. Dr Halley, on the other hand, contends that all children, without exception, belonged to that covenant by their *own right, as descended from the patriarch himself, however remote the genealogy*. In this we quite agree with Dr Halley, as will be seen in the sequel; but we differ from him respecting the use he makes of the Abrahamic covenant in regard to the question of baptism. Admitting the covenant-right of infants under the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, we nevertheless demur to their right or interest in any covenant under the Christian dispensation. Dr Halley’s argument in favour of the covenant-right of infants in these Christian times, rests upon the supposed identity of the Abrahamic and Christian covenants. He argues to the effect, that the covenant made with Abraham was never to be abolished—that it is still in existence—that whereas, formerly, all children born of Jewish parents were included in that covenant, *now*, all children in all nations of the world are included in it—that being formerly limited to *one* nation, it is now extended to *all*—that thus Abraham becomes the father of many nations. “Before the advent,” says the Doctor, “Abraham was the inheritor of Canaan;

since, he is become heir of the world." He continues: "The termination of the special privileges of the Jews is the equal bestowment of them, without their speciality, upon all mankind; the fall of Israel is the riches of the world; the casting away of Israel is the reconciling of the world." Again: "Every Gentile, now, as distinctly as was every Jew, is born entitled to the external privileges of the gospel." These quotations will suffice to bring before us the leading features of Dr Halley's theory.

Now, it is a matter of no small surprise to us, that, in discussing this question, no notice whatever should have been taken of Dr Carson's explanation of the Abrahamic covenant. Dr Halley professes great respect for the talents and learning of Dr Carson, whatever he may think of his style of conducting controversy. How is it that his views on this subject are passed over in silence? Dr Halley does, indeed, speak of Baptist friends betaking themselves to what he is compelled to call the desperate course, of maintaining that the covenant of circumcision was a covenant of temporal blessings, although St Paul declares it to have been the promise which the law could not disannul; and of insisting, that circumcision was only a civil, political, or national distinction, although St Paul calls it "the seal of the righteousness of Abraham's faith." And does Dr Halley, with this passing allusion, dismiss all the reasonings of Baptists upon this subject, and bury Dr Carson's *ten* "*observations*"*

* *Vide* Baptism in its Mode and Subjects, p. 214, *et seq.*

in oblivion along with them? We are at a loss to imagine how he could include Dr Carson's arguments in reference to the Abrahamic covenant, amongst those which represent it as *merely* a covenant of temporal blessings. The leading characteristic of Dr Carson's theory is, that the covenant of circumcision had both a *letter* and a *spirit*; that, in the former aspect, it was to discontinue, while, in the latter, it was to be perpetuated in all nations till the end of time. Has not Dr Halley read Dr Carson's views upon this subject?

We are not sure whether we correctly apprehend Dr Halley's *own* view of the covenant of circumcision; for, while he lays much stress upon its being an evangelical covenant, he, at the same time, speaks of Abraham as being the *inheritor of Canaan*, which, one would think, can only be understood as alluding to national privileges bestowed upon his posterity. Whether, therefore, in speaking of the Abrahamic covenant as the evangelical covenant, he means absolutely to deny that it was in *any* sense a covenant of temporal blessings, or that it was in any point of view a civil, political, and national covenant, does not appear quite manifest. If Dr Halley means to assert, that it was *exclusively* evangelical in its nature, and that *nothing* of a temporal and national character belonged to it, then we think he only takes a one-sided view of this ancient covenant—looks at it correctly enough in one of its aspects, but overlooks the other. To maintain that the covenant of circumcision is *merely* a covenant of temporal blessings, would

perhaps be to take a somewhat desperate course. This, at least, is not the course that I am disposed to take. On the other hand, it appears to me that Dr Halley himself takes quite as desperate a course in an opposite direction, in maintaining, if such is his meaning, that the Abrahamic covenant was exclusively evangelical. Truth often lies between two extremes. So, we believe, it will be found to do as it regards the true nature of the Abrahamic covenant. The two extreme views of this matter are, the exclusively spiritual theory on the one hand, and the exclusively temporal on the other. Now, we believe that this covenant was exclusively neither the one nor the other. We think it was unquestionably both of a temporal and spiritual nature. With the 3d chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians under our eye, we cannot certainly deny its spiritual character; for it is there represented as a covenant in which *none* but spiritual people are interested—a covenant formed only with those who possess the faith of Abraham. On the other hand, looking at the terms in which it was expressed when first instituted, and taking into consideration the whole subsequent history of the posterity of Abraham, it seems to us impossible to deny that it was also, in another point of view, temporal, and had a regard to the Israelites as a nation. Dr Halley, it seems, considers the Abrahamic covenant as identical with the gospel, and, we suppose,*

* In his recent work in Reply to Mr Stovel and Dr Wardlaw, we find Dr Halley expressing himself precisely in accordance

he would assign all that is temporal or national, as it regards the posterity of Abraham, entirely to the *Sinaitic* covenant made with Moses, four hundred and thirty years later. For this, we think, he has no authority whatever. We regard the ancient covenant made with Abraham at that early period, as just furnishing the rude outline of all the future religious history of the world. It was the germ of both the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, and they were but the successive developments of this original institution. In other words, the covenant made with Abraham was to be fulfilled in both a temporal and a spiritual sense. During the whole of the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, that which was temporal was most prominent; on the contrary, under the Christian dispensation, that which is spiritual holds the most conspicuous place, the temporal having faded away.

This is not mere theory. It can be easily established by a reference to the Scriptures. I have appealed to the terms of the original transaction with Abraham, as affording proof respecting the temporal provisions of the Abrahamic covenant. Indeed, the language is so explicit, that, I confess, I cannot conceive how Dr Halley, or any one else, can controvert the opinion that temporal and national blessings were with the supposition here made. He speaks (p. 144) of the visible or national Church of Israel, as being the creation, not of the Abrahamic covenant, but of the Mosaic Law. In speaking thus, we feel quite convinced that he makes a groundless and unwarranted distinction, as, indeed, we think we have sufficiently proved in this and the following pages.

included in the covenant of circumcision. God promises to Abraham a numerous seed. Can it be doubted that this promise had reference to a carnal as well as a spiritual seed? He promises to be a God to Abraham's posterity. And, while we admit that this is to be understood, in one sense, as implying that he would be specially a God to all believers, can it be doubted that it also implied that he would be a God to them in an inferior sense, irrespective of character—that he would be the God of the descendants of Abraham viewed as a nation? Can it be for a moment doubted, that this was the primary intention of the promise? Again, God promises to give to the posterity of Abraham the land of Canaan; and surely the *earthly* Canaan was intended as well as the heavenly. To my mind, indeed, it appears perfectly plain that the covenant wore two aspects—a temporal and a spiritual; or, as Dr Carson says, that it had a letter and a spirit. Of all the innumerable things," says Dr Carson, "which have a letter and a spirit with respect to Christ and his people, there is not one instance in which a magnificence is not given to the letter, which can be fully found *only* in the spirit. So little reason have we to think it strange that God should call himself the God of a whole nation, in a typical sense, when the body of that nation were not his true people."*

Dr Halley has not adduced a single argument to prove that the covenant of circumcision was not a

* Baptism in its Mode and Subjects, p. 222.

covenant of temporal blessings. He may prove ever so clearly that it was an evangelical covenant, but this does not prove that the same covenant was not also of a temporal nature. Perhaps Dr Halley would argue that the covenant could not have promised temporal blessings, from the case of Ishmael, who, though circumcised, did not share in any such blessings. Possibly he might argue, inferentially, from this circumstance, that the Abrahamic covenant must have been solely one of spiritual privileges, and that circumcision sealed these privileges *only*. But, in reply to this argument (whether Dr Halley would adopt it or not), it is quite sufficient to say, that Ishmael was not included in the covenant in *any* sense. The distinction between him and Isaac, who was not yet born, could not have been made more explicitly than it is in the account of the first establishment of the covenant with Abraham. Though God promises, in answer to a parent's anxious intercession for his living son, to bless Ishmael, that he should beget twelve princes, and should become a great nation; yet he says distinctly that he would establish his *covenant* with Isaac. Now, the import of circumcision must, of course, be judged of from the nature of the covenant of which it was the sign. As applied to Ishmael, who was not in the covenant, it could have no meaning foreign to the covenant to which it properly belonged. Ishmael, and not only he, but all then belonging to the family of Abraham were circumcised, as belonging to *him*, as the property

of the *patriarch*, and only as a token of the covenant made with him; for not one of the children of Abraham then living, or of his servants, belonged to the covenant, which was made only with Abraham himself, and his seed *after* him. But the rite of circumcision, though at first applied to all the family of Abraham, was evidently not meant to be perpetuated except in the line of Isaac. Consequently, the covenant as established with the descendants of Isaac, to whom *temporal* as well as spiritual promises were made, is the only legitimate exponent of the rite of circumcision.* Nothing, we think, can be plainer, as already

* Dr Halley, in his reply to Dr Wardlaw, says (p. 146): "I might here inquire if the covenant sign and seal were restricted to the line of Isaac, and if the membership of the Jewish Church was co-extensive with that line. On the one hand, were not the Ishmaelites, although not in the ancient Church, circumcised? On the other, were not the Edomites, although circumcised in the line of Isaac, excluded from the ancient Church? The observations made above may be, perhaps, a sufficient answer to these questions. Circumcision was, undoubtedly, the sign or token of the covenant which God made with Abraham. (Gen. xvii. 10, 11.) This being the case, it must follow, that so far as it had the divine sanction, it was to be restricted to the line of Isaac. As it was the token of the covenant, and as that covenant was confined to the line of Isaac, I know not what can be plainer than that the restriction of the rite to Abraham's posterity, through Isaac, was the *intention* of its divine founder. On the same principle, we argue, that as the covenant was subsequently perpetuated in the line of Jacob, and not of Esau (Gen. xxxv. 11, 12; Rom. ix. 11-13), so it was never intended that circumcision should be observed by the Edomites, but should be again further limited to the seed of Jacob. If the posterity of Ishmael, Abraham's own son, and of Esau his descendant, observed the rite of

shown, than that temporal blessings were promised in the very terms of the covenant as first instituted. It is certainly true, that many of the descendants of Isaac never shared in those specific national privileges which were afterwards enjoyed; there were many who never inherited Canaan. What then? Does this prove that the covenant had no temporal provisions? Certainly not. The covenant was made with Abraham himself, not with every individual of his posterity, even in the favoured line. Accordingly circumcision is called, not the *seal*, but the *token*, of the covenant. It sealed nothing to individuals. It signified that all the promises of the covenant should assuredly be fulfilled as made to Abraham; but it did not signify that those promises should be fulfilled to *every individual* of the promised seed. They *were* all fulfilled to Abraham. A numerous seed was given him. God was their God, and he gave them Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. They were fulfilled in the *letter*, by the bestowment of temporal blessings; and as there were always some amongst the Jews, however few, who believed as Abraham did, a spiritual seed mixed up with the carnal, they were, therefore, from the first, fulfilled in the spirit as well as the letter, even as they are

circumcision, their doing so was without the divine sanction. All we are concerned with is *the covenant*, and with circumcision only so far as it is the sign of that covenant; and no argument can be worth anything that is founded upon extraneous circumstances and the self-adopted practices (even though divine in their origin) of individuals and nations.

still being fulfilled, and will continue fulfilling to the end of time.*

If other evidence were required of the covenant of circumcision including temporal as well as spiritual blessings, we find that evidence, inferentially, in the fact, that circumcision was not optional—that it was to be enforced upon all the family of Abraham, and all the descendants of Isaac and Jacob: “He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, *must needs* be circumcised.” (Gen. xvii. 13.) The judgment denounced against all the uncircumcised is: “If any man child is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken

* Dr Halley says (p. 149 in his Reply): “If circumcision had been the express seal or sign of membership in the national Church, confined to the line of Isaac, it would scarcely have been suspended during the forty years when the ritual and institution of the Church were first ordained.” I reply, Circumcision is not regarded by us as the seal or sign of membership in the national Church, but simply as the sign of the covenant. As for its suspension, we are not bound to account for it. But what forbids the opinion that it was a faulty neglect on the part of the people, all of a piece with their rebellious spirit and manners in the wilderness? Or, supposing that circumcision *was* the seal and sign of membership in the national Church, it is quite a sufficient reason for its disuse in the wilderness, that none of that wicked generation were, in fact, allowed to enter into Canaan, to be incorporated in the national Church, and to enjoy the temporal blessings of the covenant. No sooner did their descendants pass over Jordan, and enter upon the promised inheritance, than, by divine direction, the rite was renewed. From that time the nation and the Church were identical, from that time circumcision was strictly and regularly practised, and from that time it may be considered to have become, *in effect*, the seal and sign of membership in the Jewish Church.

my covenant." (Verse 14.) No one of adult years, who refused to be circumcised, could belong to the covenant. Abraham was commanded to circumcise all the men of his house. He had authority to enforce the rite upon all. Compulsion was the law of the institution. Would this have been the case, if circumcision had been the sign of a covenant exclusively spiritual? The institution of a rite to be thus enforced upon all would, in the case of a purely spiritual covenant, have presented a great anomaly—would have been incongruous with the very nature of such a covenant. But if the covenant wore a civil, a political, and a national aspect, as well as a spiritual aspect, then the enforcement of circumcision can be accounted for. Involving, in this view, nothing of a moral nature, no exception can be taken against the law which made submission to this rite compulsory. We therefore conclude, from this peculiarity in the application of its sign, as well as from the express terms employed, in its first institution, that the covenant must have been one of temporal and national privileges, and not as Dr Halley argues, exclusively evangelical.

The conclusion, then, to which we come from the preceding considerations is, that the Abrahamic covenant, viewed as a whole, was of a *mixed* nature. One part of it was entirely spiritual, having reference to the spiritual seed only—that is, to those who possessed the faith of their father Abraham. In this part of the covenant children never had—*could not*—have any interest, since, as just signified, it had respect only to those who exercised the faith of Abraham.

But there was another part of the covenant which held out to the posterity of the patriarch the hope of temporal blessings, and promised certain peculiar national privileges to the carnal seed of Abraham. In this subordinate, this inferior part of the covenant, children *were* included, as indeed was the whole body of the Jewish nation, infants and adults, males and females. But, then, this was just that part of the covenant which was to be abrogated; and therefore the fact of infants having been interested in this merely temporal and national part of the covenant, affords no proof of their belonging to any covenant under the present dispensation.

But that we may not avoid anything that seems to countenance the Pædo-baptist theory, we admit, further, that while one part of the covenant was exclusively spiritual, having reference to the spiritual seed only, the other was not exclusively temporal; for, in addition to the typical signification of the national blessings it bestowed, it also secured to the carnal seed many external religious advantages. Still we shall find that this feature of the case in no way helps the cause of our Pædo-baptist friends. Let us see how the case stands.

By virtue of this covenant, the whole body of the Jewish nation stood in a peculiar relation to Jehovah—in a relation, we admit, very similar to that which Pædo-baptists suppose still specially to subsist between all baptized children and Jehovah. The Jewish nation, in fact, was the visible Church of God, using this phrase in the conventional sense, as includ-

ing a mixture of persons of all kinds—as comprising, irrespective of character, all who are outwardly in covenant with the Lord. While Jehovah was, in a special sense, the God of the invisible Church amongst the Jews, he was, in another view, the God of the nation. The Israelites were his children, a holy nation, a chosen generation, a peculiar people; and, as such, they had religious privileges which other nations did not possess. The apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, makes an objector ask—“What advantage, then, hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision?” and then, he himself meets the objection by replying, “Much every way; chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God.” “Much every way,” says Paul; that is, they possessed advantages, *in every respect*, over all other nations. And what were those advantages? Why! God was their King. He ever exercised a special watchfulness over them, and protected them as a father protects his children. They were not only born entitled to the special privileges of the Jewish nation, of which, as the apostle tells us, the possession of the oracles of God was the chief, but they, from the moment of their birth, were in covenant with God; they were, in a peculiar sense, by mere carnal descent, the people of God. “They were not only born into the kingdom of Israel,” as Dr Carson observes, “but were not afterwards put away for unbelief.” No outward or visible distinction was made between one Jew and another—between the visible

and the invisible Church. All who belonged to the nation were also recognised as members of the Church. As a nation, they were all the people of God, and were all typically holy. Hence, they all united in the same ritual observances—all were regarded as having an equal interest in the sacrifices and oblations—all, without distinction, were admitted to celebrate the passover, and all alike kept the appointed feasts. Here, then, we have the proper idea of a visible Church; and we see that it well accorded with the substance and genius of Judaism. It was indeed an integral part of it. In this sense we agree with Dr Wardlaw, "The nation was the Church."

Does this view of things, then, favour the notion of a visible Church in gospel times? We unhesitatingly answer, No—not in the least degree. There is not a shadow of a reason for supposing that a similar state of things exists now. A visible Church among the Jews is no precedent for a visible Church among Christians. The Jewish polity was a thing *sui generis*; the spiritual kingdom of Christ is quite another thing: nor are we warranted to look for anything analogous to the Jewish theocracy under the gospel dispensation. It is certainly true, that the external religious privileges which were secured to the posterity of Abraham, are equally enjoyed in these gospel times, and extended, or designed to be extended, to all the nations. But the inference, that these privileges are now enjoyed as a perpetuation of the Abrahamic covenant, is quite groundless. These advan-

tages were only a part of what that covenant secured. It cannot be argued that the Abrahamic covenant, *as a whole*, was to continue; and, beyond what the Scriptures authorize, who can make selections out of its many provisions and privileges, and say, This was to abide—this to be abolished? The Scriptures do indeed teach unequivocally, that the covenant, in that part which concerns believers, was to remain, and continue for ever; but there is no warrant for supposing that the other part of the covenant, *as such*, in any of its blessings, was to be permanent. The external privileges of the gospel are now possessed, not because similar advantages were secured by the covenant made with Abraham to his posterity, but as being *common* to both dispensations. They are made universal now by a new enactment—by the command of the great Author of Christianity, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

The covenant, considered in its spiritual sense, as made with all who possess Abraham’s faith, does indeed still exist: but that more general aspect of it, in which the whole of Abraham’s carnal seed were comprehended, and by virtue of which the Jewish nation was constituted the visible Church of God, has faded away—this peculiar feature has been obliterated. In this view, it was annulled at the expiration of the Jewish Church-state. In its higher and more important sense it still remains, its original beauty and perfection, unveiled by Jewish forms and ceremonies,

shining out more clearly, more beautifully, and more gloriously than it did under the dispensation of the letter. This is the covenant which is referred to in Heb. viii. 10, &c.: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Observe, too, the apostle's remark upon this covenant in the following verse: "In that he saith, A *new* covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." This new covenant, then, the distinguishing characteristic of which is, the putting of God's laws into the mind, and writing them in the heart of his spiritual people, is the only covenant that is known by Paul and the other writers of the New Testament under the spiritual reign of Christ on the earth.

This being the nature of the gospel or evangelical covenant, it is plain that infants cannot by any possibility belong to it. None but those who believe, as Abraham did, can be considered as included in it. But we apprehend that Dr Halley does not mean the same thing by the evangelical covenant as we do. By giving this designation to the Abrahamic covenant,

rather than calling it a spiritual covenant, he no doubt means to signify that one express object of it was to provide external religious privileges; and that the covenant, in this part, was to remain under the Christian dispensation. This evidently is what he means by saying, that “whereas formerly all children born of Jewish parents were included in the covenant, now all children in all nations of the world are included in it;” and that “every Gentile now, as distinctly as was every Jew, is born entitled to the external privileges of the gospel.” Of course, these words of Dr Halley give a true representation of the actual state of things under the gospel dispensation; but the universal religious privileges which he refers to, are not conferred by any covenant, and it is mere assumption to say that they are. The only sense in which the covenant now exists, is as a spiritual covenant formed with believers, and not as one supplying mere outward religious advantages. These are the *means* of bringing men into the covenant, but are no part of the covenant itself. Unspiritual people possess the external privileges; spiritual people *only* belong to the covenant: therefore, that in which unspiritual people have an interest cannot be the gospel covenant. That believers or renewed characters only belong to this covenant is most clearly proved by the words of the apostle Paul, already alluded to in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But in order to make this still more apparent, let us notice the reasoning of the apostle in the 3d chapter of

the Epistle to the Galatians, where he enters fully into an explanation of the ancient covenant in its Christian import. The whole design of the apostle in this chapter, is to prove, in opposition to the low and worldly ideas of the Jews, that the covenant which God had made with Abraham was, in its highest point of view, purely spiritual. Hence he argues that they who are of faith, no matter whether they be Jews or Gentiles, the same are the children of Abraham. (Verse 7.) He adds in the next verse : “ And the Scripture foreseeing that God would *justify* the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” How were all nations to be blessed ? Manifestly by being justified by faith, as Abraham was. If there could be any doubt about this from the phraseology of this verse, the following verse removes it entirely when it says, “ So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” In the verses following, the apostle shows the impossibility of being justified by law ; and then he again speaks, in contrast with this mode of justification, of the blessing of Abraham coming on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ—that is, the blessing of being justified by faith, as just explained, and as still further evidenced by the last clause of verse 14, taken in connexion with the former part of the verse : “ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles *through Jesus Christ*, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit *through faith*.” Here, moreover, we see that besides faith, the outpouring of the

Spirit was an additional blessing to be bestowed upon the Gentiles through Christ. In the 16th verse, he explains still further how these blessings were to be secured through Christ. He was emphatically the seed through whom these invaluable blessings were to come to the Gentiles. He represents these promises, viz., of the bestowment of the Spirit, but more especially of justification by faith, as being identical with the Abrahamic covenant; that is to say, in other words, that the covenant made with Abraham, and confirmed in Christ four hundred and thirty years before the law, and which the law could not disannul, was not indeed, in the most important view of it, a covenant of external religious privileges, but of spiritual blessings—a covenant in which none but justified believers were included. Whoever *believes*, belongs to this evangelical covenant—he is a child of God. (Verse 26.) And here we cannot omit to notice that in this connexion we find baptism introduced, implying, as it would seem, that, in this ordinance, believers were visibly introduced into this evangelical covenant—this covenant of saving blessings; and from the manner of its introduction, we should naturally infer that this was well known to be the express design of the ordinance. Faith being the qualification and the warrant for any one participating in the blessings of this new covenant, the apostle adds (verse 28), “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s”—How? Not surely

as being proselyted to the Christian religion. No, no; that notion will not do here. If ye be Christ's, as believers, a sense which alone is in accordance with the whole of this chapter—"then are ye Abraham's seed"—his spiritual seed—"and heirs according to the promise." How can infants belong to such a covenant as this?

Having shown the nature of the Abrahamic covenant, both in its temporal and spiritual characteristics—in the aspect it wore to the carnal seed of Abraham, the Jewish nation, and that which it wears to all believers in all nations—a few words are required respecting the sign or token of this *mixed*, this *two-phased* covenant. The rite of circumcision was administered to all male children born of Jewish parents, signifying, as we have before said, that all the temporal promises made to Abraham, in reference to his posterity, should be fulfilled, and expressing the peculiar covenant relation in which they stood to God. The apostle Paul denominates circumcision, "A seal of the righteousness of faith;" but in giving it this designation, be it observed, he is speaking only of Abraham himself. He is proving to the Jew that Abraham believed before he was circumcised, and that his circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of *his own* faith. Thus, in the case of Abraham himself, it had a special significancy. In the case of others, it sealed nothing personally; but it sealed the truth, that righteousness was to be obtained by the exercise of that faith for which Abraham was so pre-eminently

distinguished—that all who possessed Abraham's faith should be justified as he was. But circumcision also had a typical, a spiritual import. It denoted, we are taught by Paul, the circumcision of the heart. For, says he (Rom. ii. 28, 29), "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." In this view, then, circumcision was the appropriate sign of the Abrahamic covenant, considered in its spiritual aspect. The typical sense of circumcision is also most plainly taught in Col. ii. 11: "In whom ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." This passage, so often appealed to as evidence of the parallel between circumcision and baptism, really proves nothing of the kind. On the contrary, it proves, as plainly as language can do, that regeneration, and not baptism, is the Christian circumcision; for it is expressly said, that the circumcision of Christ is made without hands, which at any rate cannot be said of baptism; and that it consists in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. Instead, therefore, of proving that baptism has come in the room of circumcision, it simply represents regeneration—designated here by the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh—as the antitype of the carnal ceremony. As for baptism being mentioned in such a connexion,

it only serves to furnish another testimony to the host of others of all kinds, as to the proper subjects of baptism, clearly conveying the impression that they ought to be regenerated characters, or believers. But even if baptism has come in the room of circumcision, we shall still find ourselves brought to the conclusion we have already arrived at—that none but regenerated persons are proper subjects of the ordinance. For as the spiritual part of the covenant is that which alone remains, since the casting off of the Jews as a nation, baptism could only come in the room of circumcision considered as the sign of the spiritual form of the ancient covenant; that is, it could only come in the room of circumcision, viewed in its spiritual aspect. In that aspect, we have seen it signified the circumcision of the heart; and consequently baptism, coming in its stead, could only be administered to those subjects whom circumcision, in this view, contemplated—to those who are circumcised in heart—to those who have put off the body of the sins of the flesh—to believers.

Such, then, is our view of the covenant of circumcision—a view which, it appears to us, does more to harmonize the different statements of revelation than any other with which we are acquainted; but which appears to us in no way whatever to favour the practice of infant baptism, but, on the contrary, to afford evidence that none but spiritual persons are proper subjects of the initiatory ordinance of the new covenant. To imagine, that because infants, under a very

peculiar state of things, formerly were received into a visible Church relation with God, they are to be considered as standing in the same relation now, is perfectly gratuitous. This notion of a visible Church is, so to speak, a part and parcel of Judaism; but Christianity owns it not. The tendency of infant baptism, notwithstanding all the conscientious efforts that are made to obviate it, by its advocates and friends, is, unquestionably, to formalism; whereas the whole genius of Christianity is spiritual. The notion of a visible Church may, indeed, very well answer the purpose of an established religion—it may serve to keep national Churches in countenance; but it can never be made to amalgamate with the laws and institutions of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

An objection is very commonly urged by Pædobaptists against the view we have thus given of the Abrahamic covenant—that, if children are not included in covenant relation to God now, they are deprived of privileges which they formerly possessed, and that, too, under a *milder* dispensation. A moment's consideration of the facts of the case, will show how little reason there is for originating such an objection. The privileges which the Jews possessed in consequence of their covenant relation to God, though many of them of a religious nature, were still *national*; they were privileges which distinguished the Jewish people from all surrounding nations. The apostle tells us that the principal of these was, the possession of the oracles of God; while other people

were left in a state of moral darkness, having no knowledge of God, or of his revealed will. Under these circumstances, every one must see that it was no small advantage the Jew had over the Gentile in that period of the world, and that it was no little profit that was derived from circumcision. The privileges which Jewish children enjoyed as they grew up, consisted in the special favours shown to them as a nation; and they undoubtedly enjoyed those favours in consequence of their covenant relation to God, as already explained. But now, God no longer confines his divine benefactions to one particular country; he has now no holy nation, no peculiar people, upon whom to bestow special favours as distinguished from all others. The gospel, without the need of a covenant to sanction it, is now to be preached throughout all the world; and all to whom the glad news of salvation come, do, *in fact*, possess, not merely the same, but far higher privileges than the Jews did formerly. No one nation now enjoys them by a peculiar covenant, exclusively of all others. Equal privileges are enjoyed by all to whom the gospel is sent, and there is no one conceivable advantage possessed by baptized children, which is not, in fact, possessed in an equal degree by those who remain unbaptized. It is astonishing how many errors arise from a forgetfulness of the peculiar circumstances of the Jews as a nation, chosen out of all others for most important ends by Jehovah, and distinguished, in every respect, from all other kingdoms in the

world. The due consideration of this, is the key to many a difficulty.

In referring to the reasoning of the apostle Paul in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans (which cannot be passed over while treating of this subject), we find ourselves again unhappily at issue with Dr Halley. We agree with him, of course, in saying, "That God had not judicially, by a sentence denounced upon the nation, cast off all the Israelites;" for the apostle's argument in this chapter plainly enough proves the contrary. But his comment upon the words, "If the root be holy, so are the branches," albeit the Doctor says, "So far as Israel is concerned, the illustration is too obvious to be misunderstood," we must presume to controvert. We consider his explanation of this language to be quite at variance with the general course of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, though he himself, like ourselves, makes his appeal to it. One or the other of us undoubtedly misunderstands that reasoning, and the public must judge between us. Dr Halley represents the branches here spoken of as being holy by a covenant relation, and not by personal sanctity. He says, "They were holy, not by a sanctity independent of their descent, but as springing from the holy root." Now, without entering upon the inquiry, whether there is any warrant in the Scriptures for the notion of a relative holiness, we certainly think there is not an inch of ground for such a theory to be built upon here. Paul, throughout this chapter, is speaking of *converted* Jews

only. The point of his argument is, to prove that God had not cast off his people. He proves this by referring to the fact, that he himself, and others of his countrymen, were converted to the faith of Jesus. Dr Halley makes out that the evidence of the Jews not being cast away, consisted in their still possessing religious privileges, though, as a nation, they had fallen from their exclusive relation to Abraham. This, however, is but a very meagre representation of the truth that the apostle is here seeking to establish; it is but a small part of the evidence of the non-rejection of the Jews. Nay, though it may, perhaps, be admitted into the evidence, the apostle himself does not even mention it. It is not *his* evidence. He says nothing about religious privileges; but the facts upon which he founds his argument are, that he, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was an Israelite; that God had not cast away his people, *whom he foreknew*—that is, whom he foreknew as those who would embrace the gospel and believe in Jesus; that there was still a remnant according to the election of grace—that is, a remnant of believers. These are the apostle's proofs. In the 15th verse, he argues, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" He means, that when the Jews shall be converted and received into the Church, this happy event will lead to one still more glorious—the spiritual resuscitation of the whole world. Those already converted to the Christian faith he speaks of,

in the next verse, as the first-fruits—he views them as the *earnest* of the final conversion of the whole race of Abraham, scattered over the earth, when the fulness of times shall have come. These first converts are said to be holy; but the apostle cannot possibly mean that they were merely possessed of relative holiness, for the characters he here refers to are, doubtless, the same that he has been speaking of from the beginning of the chapter. The very use of the word “first-fruits,” moreover, is sufficient to prove the apostle’s meaning. This term could not apply to persons relatively holy, because this relative holiness would belong to the whole nation. Dr Halley himself considers *all* Israel to have been relatively holy. What, then, could be meant by the first-fruits of a nation thus relatively holy? Relative holiness itself is a very questionable doctrine, much more the first-fruits of it. The apostle is manifestly referring, under this figure, to the first Jewish converts. These he very properly calls the first-fruits; and in saying that they are holy, he means that they are so in the same sense as Christians elsewhere are called holy brethren, saints, &c. Well! he says, “If the first-fruits be holy, so is the lump.” This is meant as a further proof that God had not cast off his people. It is an intimation that the divine counsels and purposes concerning the Jews shall assuredly be fulfilled. The figure does not allude to the first-fruits of grain, as the wave-offering, but rather, to the first-fruits of bread. What the quality of the first cake was, such

was the quality of the whole mass of dough from which it was made. Those of the Jewish nation who had already espoused the true faith, were the first offering presented to the Lord, and accepted; thus affording an assurance that the whole mass would be in the end in like manner approved: so God had not cast off his people. In further explanation, the apostle adds, "If the root be holy, so are the branches;" and are we to suppose that he now, all at once, turns from true holiness to relative holiness? Why, what could relative holiness have to do here? The apostle simply repeats in another way the same sentiment as is expressed in the former clause, viz., that the Jews, or at least the remnant of them according to the election of grace, will be accepted as being *personally* holy. He now speaks of these first converts as being holy branches, springing from the holy root, Abraham: and, of course, he means that they were holy, because they possessed the faith of Abraham; that being his children spiritually, they are like him—possess the same personal sanctity as that by which he was distinguished. What need is there to resort to the strange, outlandish doctrine of relative holiness, to interpret this language? Why not take it in its simple and natural sense, especially as that sense so well agrees with the connexion? We believe, indeed, that this is the only explanation that accords with the apostle's reasonings, and that it is impossible to make good any other interpretation.

In the verses that follow, the apostle represents, allegorically, the relative circumstances of Jews and Gentiles, under the Christian dispensation. To this we must devote a few lines of explanation. All arguments founded upon figurative language, it is admitted, are of a somewhat precarious nature, and consequently ought, as a general rule, to be avoided in controversy. In explaining them, some license of interpretation is always allowed, and must, in any discussion, be conceded by both parties to each other. But, allowing this freedom, that interpretation must still be most approved which agrees best with the literal sense, to be derived from other sources than the metaphor itself. Now, we think it indisputable that the old and new covenants supply the literal sense of the apostle's allegory in this chapter, respecting the olive tree and its branches; which sense we consider we have already given in our view of the nature of the Abrahamic covenant. This, therefore, must be our guide in explaining the figure here used; nor can any interpretation be admitted that clashes with the literal sense. Of course, the justness of our explanation of the allegory must depend upon the correctness of our theory concerning the covenants.

This is our explanation : The good olive tree represents Abraham and all his spiritual seed—he the root, they the branches—according with our explanation of the previous clause, “ If the root be holy, so are the branches.” The carnal seed, as finding a place in the ancient covenant, are the lifeless branches

in the good olive. They are represented (to make the allegory complete) as belonging to the good olive; but it is evident that as they had no interest in the covenant, spiritually considered, so neither are they to be regarded as having *properly* partaken of the root and fatness of the olive. These lifeless branches were to be broken off from the good olive tree; that is, from Abraham, the root, and believers, the good branches, with whom they had hitherto been visibly united; the allegory corresponding exactly with the literal sense, viz., that the carnal, the inferior part of the covenant, was to be annulled. But the good olive will continue to grow and flourish—corresponding in idea with the perpetuation of the spiritual seed, or true Church of God. Into this good olive the believing Gentiles were to be inserted—that is, amongst the spiritual seed; and they were to partake, with them that remained, of the root and fatness of the olive tree—they were to become members of the Church of Christ, and maintain their standing as such, by faith. This, we believe, to bring out the full import of this Scripture allegory.

Dr Halley having quoted the language, “If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive,” says, “The doctrine surely is, that the inserted Gentiles were placed precisely in the position of the rejected Jews; that is, were partakers of the same relative holiness.” We reply, Certainly not. The Gentiles

were not grafted in amongst the branches that were broken off—the unbelieving Jews—but amongst those that remained ; that is, those who believed in Christ—who were the spiritual children of Abraham, and constituted “the residue according to the election of grace.” The very form of language employed, independent of the principle upon which the Abrahamic covenant may be explained, forbids Dr Halley’s interpretation. The branches that were broken off were the natural branches, the carnal seed of Abraham, who believed not as did Abraham. These never possessed personal holiness ; nor is the allegorical language of the apostle to be understood as implying that they, in any proper sense of the words, ever partook of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Those who had the holy faith of Abraham, the holy root, partook of this ; and it is amongst them that the Gentiles were inserted. The apostle evidently, as we think, employs the figure of the branches in two different senses. In one part of it, he applies it to the spiritual, believing seed, in the sense of vital, living branches ; in another, he applies it to the carnal seed, whom he calls natural branches, and who may be considered, though in a sense belonging to the root, as dead and fruitless. Being thus dead and fruitless, they are broken off at the expiration of the Jewish Church-state, and the believing Gentiles are grafted in. The unbelieving Gentiles cannot be meant ; for there would be the same reason for their being broken off as the Jews—

the natural branches. If in *that* character grafted in, it would only be to be broken off again, for the same reason as the unbelieving Jews were broken off. It must, therefore, mean believing Gentiles, and we must understand, that they were grafted in amongst the believing Jews. Thus Jew and Gentile become one in the Lord.

If this view needed confirmation, the course of remarks that follow abundantly afford it. "They were broken off because of unbelief," says the apostle; "thou standest by faith." If the Gentiles were merely grafted into external religious privileges, their standing in those privileges would not depend upon their faith; for both believers and unbelievers are to possess those advantages to the end of time. Moreover, it is evident that faith is the condition of being grafted in, from verse 23: "And they also, *if they abide not in unbelief*, shall be grafted in again." Dr Halley makes out that they are *already* grafted in; and whereas, before, they were sole heirs of the promise, are now co-heirs with the Gentiles, subject to excision and forfeiture on the same conditions. Dr Halley's theory will not abide a fair scrutiny. The Jews, evidently, on the same principle as the Gentiles, can only be grafted in on the condition of faith. The whole of the chapter proves, that the good olive can only mean the spiritual Church of Christ. Into this, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, the ancient people of the Lord shall be admitted; and so all Israel shall be saved.

Thus, on a fair and impartial view of this interesting allegory, we are honestly and conscientiously convinced that Dr Halley's exposition is defective and indefensible, and that the one we have given is the only one that accords with the reasoning of the apostle, and the only one that harmonizes with the analogy of the faith.

My exposition of the Abrahamic covenant, as given in this chapter, differs, as will be found, from Dr Wardlaw's idea of that covenant, as well as from that of Dr Halley; but this difference has respect, chiefly, to the inferences of these learned divines. I am not much concerned to dispute upon the point, whether the covenant-right of infants was derived from their immediate relation to their parents, or from their remote connexion with Abraham; though I doubt not the latter is the truth. Whichever view be adopted, we deny the inference on either side, and that precisely on the same ground. Infants, whether on account of their descent from Abraham, or from parents of the stock of Abraham, belonged to the covenant of old only in its national and typical aspect, which also, as we have before explained, secured to them many external religious advantages; but they never belonged to it in its spiritual aspect, as having respect only to spiritual people. And this, let it be constantly remembered, was the very soul of the covenant. It was in this view that, even as made with Abraham, so long a time ago, it was strictly evangelical. It was in this sense that it was to be

permanent—never to pass away. In this view it still abides; and all who are of the faith belong to it, being blessed with faithful Abraham, who was the great ancestral type of all true believers to the end of time. To answer a particular purpose, the covenant wore, for a time, an inferior aspect. That end has been answered; the political and temporary has terminated, the spiritual and everlasting alone remaining. Infants might belong to it formerly—they cannot belong to it now. We deny even the possibility of their being included in the covenant in this spiritual dispensation, whether this supposed right be claimed for all universally, on Dr Halley's theory, or only, as on Dr Wardlaw's interpretation, for the children of parents who are believers. Dr Wardlaw's explanation of the covenant made with Abraham, as being a spiritual covenant, accords precisely with our own views, nor could we wish for a more complete advocacy of our cause than we find in his *Strictures on Dr Halley*. He shows, just as we ourselves are wont to argue, that this covenant exists only with spiritual people—with those who possess the faith of the patriarch Abraham; but then, he most inconsistently, as it appears to us, includes the infants of believing parents in this covenant. For this we are at a loss to discover the shadow of a reason. Nothing of the kind is even hinted at in the New Testament, when the nature of the new covenant is explained. The apostle clearly enough teaches, as Dr Wardlaw himself perfectly under-

stands, that this covenant is formed with believers, and, mark! with believers only; and, therefore, certainly not with the children of believers. Dr Wardlaw's argument is, that a divinely instituted connexion existed formerly between parents and children, which has never been repealed. We deny, in the strongest terms, that such a connexion ever existed; but even if it did, it was only in a temporal point of view—only to last so long as the seed of Abraham after the flesh were to be preserved as a distinct race, for a specific purpose. There was nothing spiritual in it. It belonged to that part of the covenant which was to pass away, together with all the peculiar laws and institutions of the Mosaic ritual. The Abrahamic covenant, however, held a decided superiority over the Sinaitic, as expressly recognising the efficacy of faith in justifying our souls, and distinctly representing all believers as, in this higher and more spiritual sense, in covenant with Jehovah, whether in patriarchal, Jewish, or Christian times, and even to the end of the world. In this, from the very nature of the case, infants never had, and never can have, either part or lot. Consequently, by refusing to recognise them as in covenant with God now, we do them no injustice. They possess, in fact, far higher privileges of a religious nature in these Christian times, than ever were enjoyed by infant Hebrews during the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations; but no covenant exists now with them, nor can we consider baptism, the rite of initiation into the *new cove-*

nant, as in any sense applicable to their circumstances. The infants of believing parents are, of course, specially favoured, as being intrusted to those whose anxious endeavour it will be to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but the new covenant is formed, not with them, but with their parents. In the blessings of that covenant they participate indirectly; but the covenant itself, as, I think, we have abundantly shown, exists only with believers.

CHAPTER IV.

PARTICULAR TEXTS.

WE have now given our views of the baptismal commission, the practice of the apostles, and the Abrahamic covenant, which we consider to furnish the three main arguments in the controversy on baptism—a controversy which has so long troubled the Church, and which we cannot flatter ourselves is likely very soon to be brought to a peaceful end. It may, perhaps, have been permitted for wise and useful purposes to engage so long and so largely the thoughts of Christian people; for however comparatively unimportant the question may seem in itself to some minds, doubtless many collateral truths and doctrines, which might have been in a measure lost sight of, have, in the agitation of the controversy, been brought forward into a more prominent point of view than would otherwise have been the case. Indeed, the subject is so interwoven with every line of theology, that we confess we have no sympathy with those who represent it as trivial and unimportant, and who think that the time devoted to its discussion is only so much time misapplied and thrown away.

Having discussed the three great divisions of the

subject, it only remains for us now to notice a few texts bearing upon the general question, that nothing of importance may seem to be avoided. Our examination of these will occupy comparatively but a short space in our little work, which it is our aim to make as concise as possible.

The first passage that requires our attention, is the well-known one which occurs in Matt. xix. 14: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." With much of Dr Halley's reasoning upon this text we entirely agree, only differing from him in the *conclusion* he arrives at. The Doctor says (p. 568): "If infants are members of the kingdom of heaven, they ought, by the officers of the Church, to be recognised in that relation." That there is a propriety in recognising infants at their innocent age as belonging to the kingdom of heaven, we readily allow. Our Lord recognised them as such when he took them in his arms and blessed them; and, doubtless, we ought to dedicate our children to the Lord, and recognise them, with pleasing emotions and grateful acknowledgments, as belonging to the kingdom of God—a truth most delightful in itself, and especially consolatory to parents, if called upon to part with beloved offspring in infancy. But we see here no *formal* act of recognition. We see nothing more than what might most naturally and appropriately have been done if baptism had never been instituted. It was a mere accidental circumstance, moreover, which led Jesus so kindly

and condescendingly to take notice of little children; and why may we not suppose that his benevolent design, in thus taking the little children in his arms and blessing them, was to assure the minds of Christians in all succeeding time, that although Christianity provided no rite, as before, specifically for children, yet they were not overlooked and cast off, as having no part in the blessings of redemption? This seems to us a reasonable way of understanding this interesting act of the Saviour; but certainly we see nothing here that, in order to its perpetuation, calls for the interference of the "officers of the Church," nor do we regard this passing act, beautiful in its simplicity, as having the remotest allusion to baptism. It was a pleasing act, free of all formality, by which children (supposing them to die in their infancy, ere guilty of actual sin) were recognised as belonging to the kingdom of heaven—safe for eternity. Dr Halley says (p. 568): "They (infants) are not indeed members of a particular Church or Christian society, for that is formed by the voluntary act of Christian men, and every man joins any such society on his own election, and is received on the approbation of its members. Were he rejected by them, he would not be expelled from the kingdom of God. Were all these particular Churches dissolved, the kingdom of God would remain a kingdom which cannot be moved." On all this we have no comment to make, except to say, which is hardly necessary, that it fully expresses our own views. But when Dr Halley asks, "How is an

infant to be recognised as a member of the kingdom of Christ? is not baptism the proper recognition of a member of Christ's kingdom?" we unhesitatingly answer, that in the case of infants, baptism is *not* the proper recognition of a member of Christ's kingdom. Adults become members of the kingdom of God by their own "voluntary act;" that is, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the regular, scriptural condition of belonging to the kingdom of God, and it is with this act alone that baptism is everywhere in the Scriptures associated. Again, Dr Halley says: "Infants have all the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace; they are redeemed from death; they are entitled to everlasting life; their interest in Christ is sure and certain, until they forfeit it by wilful transgression." True, most true. "If they cannot have faith, they do not need it; if they cannot have repentance, God requires it not from them." And we add, on the very same principle, neither do they need baptism, nor does God require it to be administered to them. That baptism, irrespective of faith, the only scriptural condition of salvation, is the sign of the blessings of the evangelical covenant, we contend is not in proof, and we cannot allow it here to be simply taken for granted. Baptism, as a public act, in which an individual declares his faith in Jesus, and expresses emblematically the hope that his sins are washed away, and by which, at the same time, he is recognised as belonging to the kingdom of Christ, has a manifest and beautiful sig-

nificancy; but we are at a loss to conceive what meaning there is in baptizing *innocent* infancy as a sign of their belonging to the kingdom of heaven. We wonder not at the gross heresy and absurdity of baptismal regeneration growing out of such a notion. It is its natural offspring.

If I am reminded of the admission made in my first chapter, viz., that Christ admitted into his kingdom any who were disposed to follow him, converted or unconverted, I merely have to say, in explanation, that a *condition* was required even in their case. They were, at least, required to acknowledge their faith in Christ as the Messiah; and though such persons might be indiscriminately admitted into the kingdom of God in its then imperfectly unfolded state, the case of infants remains just where it was. Incapable of saving faith, they are equally incapable of that lower exercise of faith which was required of all who, even in Christ's day, were recognised by baptism as members of his kingdom. "Infants, indeed," as Dr Carson well argues, "are saved out of the ordinary way." Included in the second Adam by covenant relation, they participate in the blessings of that redemption which he has wrought out. They belong, from the moment of their birth, to the kingdom of God. "They have a title to heaven, clear and incontestable, which no man can abrogate, and no Church has a right to gainsay. They are bought with a price—with the precious blood of Christ;"* but not being saved *condi-*

* The Sacraments, p. 569.

tionally by faith, and regarding baptism, on the ground of the arguments advanced in the former chapters, as properly the believer's ordinance, we wait for clearer evidence than we have yet met with, that this ordinance is in any way applicable to infants—that they have any need of it, or lose anything by its being withholden.

The next passage which requires our notice, will be found in John iii. 5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In explanation of this, Dr Halley refers to a declaration, made in a previous lecture, viz., that "of the kingdom of God there are the internal grace, and the external sign—the internal grace called the birth of the Spirit, and the external sign called the birth of water." "No one," he says, "is of the kingdom without the birth of the Spirit, and no one is recognised of the kingdom in its visible administration without the birth of water." And then, after a few connecting sentences, he demands, speaking of infants: "Had they the internal grace, who should deny them the sign?" Now, observe! what was this internal grace? We take Dr Halley's own explanation as given above: it was "the birth of the Spirit." Surely Dr Halley will not pretend that *all* infants are the subjects of this spiritual birth—that every infant coming into the world is regenerated. This were a new doctrine, indeed. And if it cannot be argued that all infants are "born of the Spirit," then they do not possess the internal grace that Dr

Halley speaks of, and consequently no injustice is done them by denying them the external sign. Dr Halley adds further: "Had they the external sign, we contend for no more." And quite enough, too; for if they had the external sign, it could not have been given them because they had the internal grace; for, even admitting that some might be "sanctified from the womb," and that, therefore, in their case, the outward sign would not be misapplied, this would be no warrant for the universal application of that sign by the baptism of all; for that could only be done on the presumption that all had the internal grace—that is, "the birth of the Spirit." "Had they neither the grace nor the sign," says Dr Halley, "how could they belong to the kingdom?" We answer, they belonged to it, as signified before, as being included in the second Adam. "Born neither of water, nor of the Spirit, how could they have entered it?" They entered it by natural birth, and nothing but subsequent guilt could exclude them from it.

But it will, no doubt, be objected against us, that, in all this, we overlook the plain declaration of the text, that none can belong to the kingdom but those who are "born of water and of the Spirit." Now we wish to avoid nothing, to blink no difficulty, to shrink from no fair investigation. We consider that our Lord is here speaking of the *divinely revealed condition* of belonging to the kingdom of Christ. That condition, as he plainly tells Nicodemus in a previous verse, is nothing less than regeneration—"Except a

man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then follows, in further explanation of the matter—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Here, then, as in so many other instances (taking the birth of water to denote baptism), we have baptism and regeneration brought into juxtaposition. What can be more significant? Baptism is here introduced, just as it is in the commission as given by Mark—"He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." It does not mean that baptism is, from any efficacy in itself, essential either in the one case or the other; but only as understood uniformly to accompany faith or regeneration. But it does seem here to be taken for granted, that the same qualification was requisite for baptism as for belonging to the kingdom of God. The baptism of water is, in our view, mentioned by our Lord as being the public avowal of faith, a decided religious act on the part of the regenerated individual, whereby he declared himself to be on the Lord's side, expressed his desire before the world to belong to his kingdom, and thus afforded evidence of his sincerity. This was, then, a public act, in which the believer, the regenerated child of God, openly declared that he was not ashamed of Christ—a test that was especially needed in those days, when even a Jewish ruler came secretly to Jesus by night, for fear of the Jews; and hence it is, that our Lord said, "Except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Now, infants cannot fulfil these conditions; they cannot repent and believe, and, so far as it is a Christian duty, become regenerate, and own Christ before men; and it is, we think, quite clear that their case was not here under consideration. Our Lord did not mean to say that infants, who are incapable of fulfilling any conditions of salvation, and are an exception to the ordinary rule as to the method of salvation, did not belong to him and his kingdom. He was explaining to Nicodemus what was essential, *according to the Scripture rule*, for salvation. He first tells him (verse 3), that regeneration is necessary, and then, he adds to this, baptism, as a public avowal of faith and discipleship; but the peculiar circumstances of children of an innocent age were clearly not under contemplation.

We must now advert to a series of passages to which Dr Halley appeals, as leading to the conclusion that baptism was the only outward and visible recognition of any one belonging to the kingdom of heaven, and that this was administered in the most indiscriminate manner to the multitudes who followed Jesus, and wished to identify themselves with him. These texts are, Matt. xi. 12: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;"—Luke xvi. 16: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it;"—and Luke vii. 29: "And all the people that heard him,

and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." Now, we raise no objections to Dr Halley's inferences from these texts. We admit that the very language implies "much popular excitement." Nor do we, for a moment, contend that "every man, by faith unfeigned and true repentance, pressed along the narrow path," or that these promiscuous multitudes were all "converted by the Spirit of grace." We admit, too, from the comparison which is instituted between Matthew's statement and that of Luke, that a great part of the multitudes of people who flocked to Jesus was, by baptism, received into the kingdom of God. We have nothing to object to Dr Halley's conclusion, that the taking of the kingdom of heaven by violence in one Gospel, is expounded, in the other, to mean being baptized with the baptism of John. Upon this comparison of passages, however, and the purpose for which Dr Halley appeals to them, we have one or two things to remark.

First, It is not *Christian* baptism that is here spoken of, but the baptism of John. I have said, in the *first* and *second* chapters, that, while John insisted upon the *necessity* of repentance, and was, in fulfilment of his particular commission, calling off the minds of the Jews from the form to the spirit, that it was no part of the duty of his office to wait for decided evidences of the repentance being sincere; that while preparing the people for a more spiritual dispensation, and warning them against the conse-

quences of hypocrisy, as he did the Pharisees, whom he called "a generation of vipers," he yet could not, consistently with his particular office, withhold baptism from any who desired it at his hands. I have also argued, that the baptism which was performed under the direction of Jesus during his life, differed nothing from that of John; that, in fact, the period of John's baptism extended till the death of Christ. I have, therefore, no difficulty in admitting, that these promiscuous multitudes were received into the kingdom of heaven, in its then undeveloped state, by baptism. But this baptism, I repeat, was John's baptism, and not Christian baptism.

But, *secondly*, It is not necessarily implied that the multitudes here spoken of were baptized by Jesus; for it is the *past* participle that is used by Luke (chapter vii. 29): "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, *having been* baptized with the baptism of John." But, in truth, it matters not whether they were baptized by John or by Jesus; for the case of the twelve re-baptized disciples at Ephesus (to mention nothing more) must ever stand as an irrefragable proof of an important distinction existing between baptism before and baptism after the death of Christ.

Thirdly, We cannot forbear to notice, as it now comes immediately before us, that in the very connexion in which the passages we have been considering occur, we meet with a very remarkable declaration, tending to confirm the distinction we contend for be-

tween John's baptism and Christian baptism, viz., "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." What can this mean, but that the brief dispensation to which John's baptism belonged was only preparatory to one greatly superior—the dispensation of the Spirit—to commence when Jesus should ascend to the Father, as argued in the first chapter of this work? Taking this into account, together with our Lord's frequent declarations concerning the spirituality of his kingdom (never realized while he was on earth), and the true character of his disciples—in view, also, of the case of re-baptism just alluded to—I do not see how we can avoid the full conviction, that the law of Christian baptism must be regarded as stricter—more spiritual, than that of the baptism of John, and, consequently, though all the multitudes spoken of in the verses we have been investigating were baptized by Jesus himself, that our principles as to the spiritual qualifications requisite for Christian baptism remain unaffected and uninvalidated.

Let us now turn our attention to the well-known, the noted text, occurring in 1 Cor. vii. 14: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." On the full examination of this text Dr Halley, does not enter in those of his lectures which are already

before the public; but apprizes us of his intention to do so in a remaining lecture on baptism yet to appear. Nevertheless, I feel inclined to propose an exposition of this text, which has ever held so conspicuous a place in the baptismal controversy.

The subject that the apostle treats of in this chapter is that of marriage. On this he discourses very much at large in a long chapter of *forty* verses. But it is observable that he does not claim inspiration for all that he says upon this subject, but explicitly declares that, in some instances, he gives only his own judgment. This is clearly the case in regard to the question on which he delivers his opinion in the 12th, 13th, and 14th verses of this chapter; which, also, sufficiently accounts for his speaking familiarly of things, concerning which it might be thought beneath the dignity of the Holy Spirit to give any revelation. The case on which Paul here gives his judgment is, whether a believer, married to an unbeliever, ought to separate. He decides in the negative, assigning as a reason, that the unbelieving husband is sanctified to his wife, and the unbelieving wife to the husband. The preposition “ἐν” appears, here, to be clearly used in the sense of “in respect to,” as in 1 Cor. xiv. 11: “Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος; a barbarian to (in respect to) me.” In Gal. i. 16., we find also a similar use of this preposition, “When it pleased God to reveal his Son ἐν ἐμοί, to me, that I might preach him

ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, *to the heathen.*" Taking this, therefore, to be the meaning of the preposition, the apostle gives his opinion to this effect: If you are already united to an unbeliever, you must remain so, the marriage law is sacred, and must be preserved inviolate. The unbelieving husband is sanctified to the wife, and the wife to the husband. He adds, else—if it were not so, if the marriage relationship were not held sacred—your children would be esteemed unclean, whereas they are holy. From the connexion, I think it is evident, that the sanctification spoken of is not to be understood in a moral or religious sense, but that it is simply a marriage sanctification that is intended, and, of course, on the same principle, I interpret the words "unclean" and "holy," as applied to the children.

Pædo-baptists have generally argued that the holiness of the children here spoken of is to be understood as a *relative holiness*. But this is a notion that cannot be sustained. If relative holiness were intended, I ask, Why should the separation of the parents affect that holiness? United, or ununited, one of the parents would still be a believer; and why should not the children be relatively holy (if this is meant) on account of the faith of the believing parent, whether separated or otherwise from the other? If this relative holiness depend only upon the faith of *one* parent—if *that* is sufficient, as the apostle represents it to be—why should the *union* of both be necessary to render it valid? Why should it

be impaired by separation? If faith in *both* the parents were essential to render the offspring holy, *then* we could understand how the dissolving of the conjugal bond might affect it. But it is not so; for faith on one side is enough. Will it be said, that, by the separation of man and wife, the children might be left to be brought up by the ungodly parent, and that they could not be esteemed, under such circumstances, as holy? It is a sufficient reply to this, that the children *might* fall to the lot of the believing parent, and surely they would then be relatively holy. But, if it should be said that both parents must live together, and their children with them, forming one family, to render the children holy, this will involve the absurdity of arguing, that though the faith of the believing party is that which constitutes the offspring holy, still they cannot be *holy* without the *unholy* parent. In every view, this notion of relative holiness seems to break down altogether; nor does it appear at all probable that the apostle had any such a figment in his thoughts.

I conclude, then, that the holiness here spoken of is simply a marriage holiness; that it can mean nothing else. The husband and wife must not separate; they are sanctified to each other. For a believer to *form* a union with an unbeliever would indeed be sinful; but if such union is already existing, it must on no account be broken. Christianity cannot in any case (with *one* exception) annul the law of marriage as a divine institution, an ordinance of God. It does

not bring confusion into the marriage relation, and destroy the *natural sanctity* of wedlock. But by dissolving the marriage relation, illegality would be stamped upon it, the past union would be represented as unlawful and, consequently, the children born under such circumstances (that is, since one of the parents became a believer) would be considered as born in unlawful wedlock—they would be regarded as illegitimate—they would be unclean instead of holy. I admit such a sense of the word “holy” to be unusual. But the holiness of the children, as already argued, is to be understood in the same sense as the sanctification of the unbelieving partner, spoken of in the first part of the verse, which cannot be regarded as of a religious nature; but, as Albert Barnes well says, “the unbelieving husband was sanctified *in regard to the subject under discussion*—that is, in regard to the question, whether it was proper for them” (the husband and wife) “to live together, or whether they should be separated or not?” so are we to regard the children as “holy” in regard to the subject under discussion; and the sum of all is in perfect agreement with the whole scope of the apostle’s reasoning—the marriage relation of the parents is legitimate, and the offspring are legitimate.

Such, then, appears to me to be the meaning of this much-controverted passage of Scripture. But whether the principle upon which we have explained it be right or wrong, one thing, at least, seems plain, namely, that whether the holiness here spoken of be

regarded as a marriage holiness, or as a relative holiness, neither of these views favours, in the least degree, the universal and indiscriminate theory which Dr Halley advocates. But as he has not yet given us his view of this passage, possibly he may have some new light to shed upon it; and we shall wait with some curiosity for his exposition. Perhaps, after all, he may think with us, that the text has nothing at all to do with the subject of our controversy.

There are a few other texts of Scripture besides those we have examined, which bear upon the question we have been discussing, but which do not seem to us to call for any specific notice. Here, therefore, we bring to a conclusion our reasonings upon the question, who are the proper subjects of baptism; having shown, as we think, in the preceding chapters, that the ordinance is designed, not for all persons of all ages and all shades of character, universally and without distinction, but *only for believers*.

CHAPTER V.

THE MODE.

REGARDING the practice of indiscriminate baptism, whether of adults or infants, as a great prostitution of a Christian ordinance—as on the one hand securing no intelligible good, and on the other, having a tendency to occasion much harm by confounding the distinction between the Church and the world—my principal design in writing upon the question of baptism was, to vindicate it from these perversions and evils—to show that it is properly the believer's ordinance—the ordinance of the Church. But having ventured to launch my little bark upon this stormy controversy, I will not altogether dismiss the subject without saying a few words concerning the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism. The two branches of this much agitated question, viz., the subjects and the mode, are quite distinct from each other, and require to be pursued in an altogether different line of argumentation. There is nothing common between them. So entirely unconnected are they with each other, that it has ever appeared to me to be nothing less than a very remarkable phenome-

non, that those who contend for infant baptism should uniformly advocate sprinkling, or something less than dipping, as the right mode of baptizing; while those who have maintained the cause of what is technically termed "believers' baptism" have, without exception (as far as I know), contended for immersion or submersion. I do think it a very singular circumstance, that there is no third party, as formerly, to advocate and practise immersing infants; or a fourth, which I believe there never has been, to adopt the method of sprinkling believers. I have, however, reason to believe that, mingled in the mass of both denominations, there are not a few of the latter class—not a few who feel it impossible to surrender the conviction, that believers alone are the proper subjects of baptism, but who, nevertheless, are not convinced that immersion is absolutely necessary to render baptism valid—who think that *any* mode is allowable. Now, undoubtedly, there must be a right and a wrong to every question; and in this matter we ought to get at the truth if possible, and every one ought to be "fully persuaded in his own mind." But this part of the question, I freely confess, never has assumed that importance in my estimation which seems, in every point of view, to belong to the other. The inquiry into the subjects of baptism involves great questions of truth in theology; *this*, in itself alone, affects no important principles of morality or religion. As a positive institution, it, of course, involves the moral principle of obedience to the command of the Redeemer. If Jesus

has enjoined immersion, and that alone, and if we are not at liberty to deviate from the literality of a positive institute; then, though there is nothing moral in dipping (nor, indeed, in any other mode), it becomes a moral duty, on account of our Lord's command; and though, were I to enter upon any lengthened discussion concerning the mode of baptism, I should feel that I was not making a stand for any great principle, yet I would acknowledge, with all seriousness and submissiveness of spirit, the duty of knowing and doing the whole will of Christ. It is this conviction that brings me briefly to turn my attention to the question of the mode of baptizing. I will, therefore, without pretending to enter upon a full investigation, state how this question presents itself to my view. I do not purpose to attempt a dissection of Dr Halley's lecture on the mode of baptism, but shall just touch upon some of its principal arguments.

That the word βαπτίζω uniformly signifies to dip, I will not venture to assert, or undertake to prove. I believe, however, that it is pretty generally admitted, on both sides, that the word *does* mean to dip—that this is its *generic* meaning, and its *most usual* meaning. Dr Halley, if I understand him aright, admits as much as this. But it appears quite evident that the word also bears the sense of covering by superfusion. This is admitted by Dr Cox, who says, as quoted by Dr Halley, “a person may indeed *be immersed by pouring*, but immersion is the being plunged into water, or *overwhelmed by it*. Were the water to ascend from

the earth, it would still be baptism, were the person wholly covered by it." The examples adduced by Dr Halley seem also incontrovertibly to establish this meaning. I shall not enter upon any minute investigation of the instances which Dr Halley has adduced, as I wish to cut short this part of the discussion. And it is the less necessary to do so, as I could add nothing to what has been done in the way of proving, that overwhelming or superfusion is *a* sense of the word βαπτίζω. I would only say, to prevent misapprehension, that I do not see how, granting affusion to be baptism, the question becomes only "one of degree;" for the very examples which Dr Halley has produced are of such a nature, that they do not allow us to understand the superfusion indicated by βαπτίζω to be partial. Even those very examples represent it as complete. The bladder floats on the top of the wave—it will not dip; but it may be overwhelmed (baptized) by the wave breaking over it. So the sea-shore, though not dipped into the water, is supposed to be quite overwhelmed (baptized) with it. Thus far we surrender the question of immersion, and, in doing so, feel no small pleasure in finding ourselves in such good company as that of Dr Cox; and are most happy, after the antagonistic position we have so long maintained, to be for once agreed with Dr Halley. On the other hand, Dr Halley concedes not a little to us, as it regards the baptisms of the Pharisees alluded to in the New Testament, admitting, as he does, that their extreme superstition may account for what might other-

wise seem the strange and almost incredible custom of immersing, not only pots, cups, brazen vessels, &c., but even *couches*. We are glad, also, to find, after having very much at length argued against the practice of immersion by the apostles in many cases, on account of the scarcity of water in Jerusalem and many parts of Palestine, he, in his appendix, expressly signifies his desire that *that* part of his lecture should be “looked upon cautiously.” “I am bound,” says he, “to acknowledge that these difficulties (*viz.*, arising from scarcity of water, &c.) may be attributed to our ignorance of the circumstances.”

The argument which is founded upon the account of the baptizing of the Israelites in the cloud and in the sea, and also that which is built upon the facts recorded respecting the day of Pentecost, although upon these two cases Dr Halley places his chief dependence, do not, we own, either of them commend themselves to our calm judgment. We are surprised that Dr Halley should think so much of these two examples, that he should even say that he must be understood as “continually leaning upon them;” for to us (we may be dull of comprehension) nothing seems plainer than that the allusions are highly figurative in both instances. Notwithstanding all that has been said, we do still think that the entrance of Israel into the sea—their passing through its deep places—the waters being as a wall to them on either side—the cloud covering and enshrouding them—and then, their emerging from the deep again on the opposite

side—we do think that this graphic description of their passage through the Red Sea is, by a very striking figure, most naturally called a baptism. And, as this was the grand event by which they were rescued from the Egyptians, and brought immediately, and from that time ever after, under the guidance and teaching of Moses, it does seem to us that this mysterious passage through the deep is most appropriately and beautifully designated a baptism to Moses in the cloud and in the sea. It was an emblematical immersion; and, from that day, the children of Israel were, in a figure, baptized into the faith of Moses.

As it regards the baptism of the day of Pentecost, it will, perhaps, create a feeling of surprise in the minds of some, when I avow my conviction, that the wind and the fire alluded to, had no *modal* signification whatever. The baptism of that day was purely a spiritual baptism—the baptism of the Holy Ghost; and we cannot conceive of anything symbolizing the mode or manner in which the Spirit comes to the mind and the heart. When we read of the Holy Ghost “coming upon the disciples,” of its being “poured out,” and “poured down,” and other similar forms of expression, we can only understand these phrases in a figurative sense, as denoting simply the bestowment, or the abundance of the gifts and influences of the Spirit. To interpret them in the way in which they are usually done by Pædo-baptists, and hence to derive an argument for a particular mode of water baptism, viz., affusion, as best resembling the

supposed mode in which the soul is baptized by the Spirit, is to materialize a divine influence, and to construct a baseless argument upon a mere figurative turn of expression. But we have other reasons for the opinion we have mentioned. The occurrences of the day of Pentecost are generally considered as the fulfilment of the language of John the Baptist:* “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” The baptism of the Holy Ghost is, we believe, understood figuratively, the wind being its emblem; but the baptism of fire is taken literally, as being accomplished by the flames of fire coming and resting upon the heads of the disciples. Now, this seems to us a strange and unnatural blending together of the figurative and the literal, and we think it much more significant, and much more in consistency with the glorious object of the day, to understand the baptism in one sense only—as the baptism of the Holy Ghost solely in a spiritual sense. Now, it is remarkable, as favouring this view, that when Jesus apprizes his disciples of the approaching baptism of the day of Pentecost, he says *nothing about the fire*, but simply, “Ye shall be baptized with the *Holy Ghost* not many days hence.” By the baptism of fire which John alluded to, I imagine, was meant the fire of persecution, which Jesus afterwards referred to when he said,† “I am come to throw fire upon the earth, and what would I but that it were already kindled; but I have a baptism to be baptized with”—(yes, he had

* Luke iii. 16.

† Luke xii. 49, *et seq.*

to pass through this *baptism of fire* as well as his disciples);—"and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." By John's baptism of fire, therefore, we understand being overwhelmed with trouble and sorrow, or plunged, as it were, into the fires of persecution. If this be the case, then, the lambent flames, like cloven tongues, which came and sat upon the disciples' heads, while they were very expressively emblematical of the most distinguished gift of the Spirit on that day, viz., the power of speaking in other tongues, had no allusion to baptism whatever. To call this a baptism of fire, is at the best a far-fetched and unnatural notion. How could a small flame of fire like a cloven tongue, coming and sitting upon the head of the disciple, symbolize sprinkling, or pouring, or any other mode of applying water. Fire is, in any view, a poor emblem of water.

Well, then, again, the wind! If this is emblematical at all, it may just as well be regarded as an emblem of immersion as of sprinkling, and better. For while the *Rantists* say, "The wind came upon them," which, however, bears no resemblance to sprinkling, nor even to pouring, unless that pouring be complete superfusion, the *Baptists* may say, "The wind completely surrounded them, so that they were symbolically immersed in it." But, the truth is, neither party can appeal to this; for we do not know that there was any wind at all. The Scripture account does not say

that there was. It simply says there came a *noise* as of a mighty rushing wind. All we can learn is, that there was a *loud mysterious noise*, which filled the house where the disciples were assembled; and, surely, we can neither of us make a noise to symbolize a visible action either of sprinkling or immersing. The baptism of Pentecost was, then, a spiritual baptism, and that alone. It was the extraordinary bestowment of spiritual influences and gifts, and from this nothing can be argued as to the mode of water baptism, or, if anything, setting the emblems aside, it would doubtless favour immersion, as the minds of the disciples were entirely absorbed by the Spirit, and all their powers and faculties wholly subjected to its influence.

The only instance, so far as I have discovered, in which Dr Halley argues directly in favour of sprinkling, as one of the meanings of βαπτίζω, is that in which he reasons upon the language of the apostle Paul, in Heb. ix. 9-14. If his exposition of these verses is right, then (to borrow his words), "our case is clean gone." If sprinkling be proved in one instance to be a meaning of baptism, it is as good as a hundred. I must, here, to do justice to Dr Halley's argument, give his words entire, though the quotation will be rather long.

He says: "I think the divers baptisms of the Jews, mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, include, if they do not exclusively denote, the purifications by sprinkling performed in the Jewish temple. I solicit attention to the context. The apostle had described

the material sanctuary of the first covenant, ‘which,’ he says, ‘was a figure for the time being, in which were offered oblations and sacrifices, which could not perfect the worshipper, as to his conscience; enjoined until the time of reformation, in respect only to meats and drinks, and *divers baptisms, ordinances of the flesh*. But Christ being come, a high priest of future good, through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us, entered once for all into the most holy place. For if the blood of calves and goats, and the ashes of a heifer *sprinkling the unclean, purify so far as the cleansing of the flesh*; by how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God, purify your conscience from dead works, for the service of the living God?’ My conviction is, on reading the whole paragraph, that the divers baptisms included the sprinkling of the blood of calves and goats upon the altar, and the sprinkling of the unclean with the water of separation, in which were mingled the ashes of the heifer. Those baptisms were ordinances of the flesh; and these sprinklings were for the cleansing of the flesh. Those baptisms could not purify the conscience. The blood of Christ, of which the blood sprinkled upon the altar, and the ashes sprinkled upon the unclean, were figures for the time being, does purify the conscience.”*

* The Sacraments, pp. 383, 384.

Now, it will be observed that Dr Halley gives his own translation of the verses above quoted; and to question the accuracy of any part of it may, perhaps, appear presumptuous. Yet, as it is universally admitted that the structure of some of the sentences is peculiar, and that there is some difficulty in proposing any perfectly satisfactory rendering, we feel the less hesitation in questioning whether Dr Halley's translation of the 9th and 10th verses is the best that can be given; and in venturing to propose instead of it, a somewhat different rendering, Dr Halley represents the oblations and sacrifices as having been enjoined *in respect only* to meats, and drinks, and baptisms. To this, I confess, I can attach no definite idea. I do not know what it means. It may be grammatical, but I cannot think it brings out the true meaning of the inspired writer. Stuart renders "[and all the] ordinances pertaining to the flesh had respect only to meats," &c., supplying the words, "and all the," for which I can see no sufficient reason. Dr Halley (verse 10) adopts the reading *δικαιώμασι*, taking this noun in apposition with *βρώμασι*, *πόμασι*, and *βαπτισμῶς*, and so making the ordinances of the flesh to be explanatory of the meats, drinks, and baptisms, and to apply to them alone. Stuart adopts *δικαιώματα* (the authority for either word is about equal); but though we do not, in this verse, follow his translation, we give the preference to the reading (*δικαιώματα*), which he sanctions. So far as the use of the preposition *ἐπι* is concerned, our authority is

Dr Bloomfield.* We would translate as follows: "Which (sanctuary) was a figure for the time being, in which were offered oblations and sacrifices, which could not make him who performed the service perfect in respect to his conscience, being only ordinances of the flesh,† together with meats, drinks, and divers ablutions, enjoined until the time of reformation."

This we believe to be correct in point of grammar, and we also believe that it expresses the true sentiment of the inspired writer. These two verses are those only which affect our reasoning, as will be seen directly. We shall make use of Dr Halley's translation of the remaining verses so far as reference to them may be required.

Now, on analyzing this whole paragraph, commencing with the 9th verse, and ending at the 14th, bearing in mind the altered rendering we have suggested in the 9th and 10th verses, it appears to me that what is said in the first part (verses 9, 10,) finds its parallel in what immediately follows (verses 11, 12), and that then, in a concluding sentence

* *Vide* Bloomfield, Gr. Test., *in loco*.

† It may possibly be objected that oblations and sacrifices are not ordinances of the flesh; but we think it is very plainly implied that they are to be regarded in that light, in the 13th verse, where the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices, mingled with the ashes of the victim, is said to "purify so far as the cleansing of the flesh." This does not imply that they had not a more important design and signification; but it does fully justify their being designated carnal ordinances (literally, righteousnesses of the flesh), as well as the meats, drinks, and baptisms.

(verses 13, 14), this parallel is taken up again. Let us explain our meaning.

All those Jewish rites that are first enumerated, and designated *ordinances of the flesh*—not only the meats and drinks and baptisms, as Dr Halley represents, but also the oblations and sacrifices—find their proper parallel in the one offering of Christ. The contrast is between oblations and sacrifices, *together with* meats, drinks, and baptisms, ordinances of the flesh, and the blood of Christ, which has obtained eternal redemption for us. Then, in the following verses, as I said, the parallel is taken up again, but in a more specific form, as it regards the first part of it. The meats, drinks, and baptisms are now left out of the consideration; and the contrast is noticed as exhibited, more especially between the *sacrifices* of the Mosaic ritual, and the great sacrifice of the Redeemer of mankind. Sprinkling is mentioned in this second parallel, not as a thing separate from the sacrifice, but rather as a part of the sacrificial rite, as properly belonging to it, as involved in the very offering of sacrifices; and very justly so, for never was an oblation or a sacrifice offered without the accompanying ceremony of sprinkling the blood of the animal offered, and its ashes mixed with water upon the unclean. So, then, the contrast here is simply between the sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood (including the sprinkling) and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; and there is no allusion, as I see, in the latter, that is the sprinkling, to the

baptisms before spoken of—no reason to suppose that those baptisms are expounded by the sprinklings—that the latter are exegetical of the former.

Dr Halley says: “The apostle had made no reference whatever in the first part of the parallel (verses 9, 10) to the sprinkling, if it were not included in the baptisms.” We reply, agreeably to the above exposition, it was included in the sacrifices. He says, “It was not a gift, nor a sacrifice.” We repeat, Though not a sacrifice, it was involved in the sacrifice. Subsequently, the Doctor speaks of the apostle (on supposition of the baptisms not being identical with sprinkling) as “excluding the sprinklings from his enumeration, and immediately, as though he had mentioned them, making them the strength of his argument.” We reply, He does not exclude the sprinklings, for they were so well known to accompany the oblations and sacrifices, that they needed no specific notice; that is, they needed not to be mentioned by name. In taking up the parallel the second time, they *are* specified, showing that, besides the contrast between the blood of bulls and the blood of Christ, there is also the additional point of contrast between the cleansings of the flesh by these sprinklings, and the purifying of the conscience by the application of the blood of Christ through the Eternal Spirit. We think, then, that Dr Halley’s exposition of these verses, founded upon a doubtful translation, is fairly questionable; that the explanation we have given has, at least, equal claims to be received with his; and, therefore, that no conclu-

sive argument can be deduced from this portion of Scripture in favour of explaining baptism by sprinkling.

I have expressed my conviction that the word, βαπτίζω may denote superfusion as well as immersion; but this appears to be the widest latitude we are allowed to give it. Whether the former mode was ever employed in apostolic times, it is, we believe, impossible to determine. But from the admitted signification of the word, viz., to dip, together with the frequent custom of resorting to rivers and streams of water for the purpose of baptizing—going down into the water, and coming up again out of it—whatever may be the exact meaning of the Greek prepositions employed—there can be no doubt, one would suppose, but that immersion was the customary mode of baptizing in those times.

The only remaining question of any importance, is that which Dr Halley has discussed in the first part of his lecture on the mode of baptism, viz., whether, conceding that the word βαπτίζω means to dip, and even admitting that it means to dip only, we are not still at liberty to deviate from the strict letter of the baptismal commission, considered as a positive institution. This narrows the whole question within a very small space. All philological investigation, in fact, becomes superfluous if it can once be shown that positive institutions are not binding, *verbatim et literatim*. The whole stress of the controversy, therefore, rests upon this single point. Into this let us inquire honestly and impartially.

Dr Halley instances, in proof of his own view of

the case, that positive laws are not binding *as to the letter, first*, the positive command given to the Israelites in reference to the injunctions laid upon them by Jehovah: "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and upon thy gates." In regard to this, we submit that it is not a case in point. It was a command certainly; but it was very different from a positive institution; nor do we imagine that it was ever intended to be obeyed literally. It was a bold, figurative way of enjoining upon the people the duty of keeping the commands of God continually in mind, and nothing more. Next, Dr Halley refers to "the kiss of charity." But here, again, we can see nothing analogous to a religious institution or ordinance. It was simply a command to the Christians of those times to manifest their affection, their holy love towards each other, in accordance with their usual mode of salutation; and we fulfil the spirit of it (all that in such a case is required) by exchanging "the holy kiss" for the right hand of Christian fellowship. Neither do we regard the Lord's Prayer as a positive institution. It was a mere passing circumstance that led to its being uttered and taught to the disciples. One of them said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." And he said unto them, "When ye pray, say Our Father," &c. But, if this *be* a positive institution, it then becomes a question, as in the case of baptism, whether we do right

to omit it in our prayers—whether we ought not uniformly to make use of this comprehensive form.

The next instance we have to notice is found in the phrase *υφ' ἡμῶν δεῖπνον*—the Lord's supper. Dr Halley argues that, if we think ourselves at liberty to overlook the plain letter of the law in this case, and consider ourselves to fulfil our Lord's command fully and sufficiently, whatever time of the day we meet together to break bread in commemoration of him, then, by parity of reasoning, we fulfil his command in reference to baptism, simply by the use of water, irrespective of mode. Now this, we admit, is a case in point; because, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, we have the example, not merely of a common command, but of a positive institution, equally important with that of baptism. Yet here, be it observed, that the designation which Paul has given to the ordinance is not found in the terms of the institution itself, and therefore, whether we make it an *ἄριστον* or a *δεῖπνον*, we in no way deviate from the original institution, or from the words of our adorable Redeemer.

The question, whether, under any circumstances, it can be allowable to change the elements, is more to the purpose. That “a man of stern temperance principles, who conscientiously believes, after careful and devout examination, that it is his duty to abstain from wine at the supper,” perfectly fulfils the intention of the ordinance by substituting water for wine, is, I think, not quite self-evident. The firmest adherent to the principles of total abstinence would not, I be-

lieve, refuse to drink unfermented wine in the celebration of the Lord's supper; and it cannot, I presume, be proved that *that* was not the kind of wine used in the first institution of the ordinance. I, however, can cheerfully subscribe to the first part, and answer affirmatively to the last, of the following quotation from Professor Stuart, given by Dr Halley, in a note at p. 315: "The whole symbolic instruction conveyed by the ordinance of the Lord's supper is this: what food and drink, represented by the more important articles of the same, are to the body for its nourishment and support, and comfort; that a crucified Saviour is to the soul, for its life, and preservation, and comfort. Could not the inhabitants of a country, then, to whom it might not be possible to procure bread and wine, when it was proper to celebrate the Lord's supper, employ other elements which would symbolize the death of Christ, and the benefits of that death to the believer with like significance?" I certainly can do no other than answer this question in the affirmative. What, then! must we at length give in? Must we at last surrender, and honourably lay down our arms, and cast ourselves upon the generosity of our conquerors? I confess I do not see that the controversy is yet brought to this issue. I could almost, in my heart, wish it were. But the reply to the case put by Stuart, so far as Dr Halley reasons from it to baptism, is obvious, viz., that the change of the elements under the circumstances supposed, would arise from *inevitable necessity*, which cannot, of

course, be pleaded for changing the mode of baptism from immersion to sprinkling or pouring. Therefore, we do not see that this case, or that of the stern *tee-totaller*, can justify any deviation from the strict letter of the law respecting baptism.

There is yet one other case to which we must advert, viz., the law of the Sabbath. "As a Jewish ordinance," says Dr Halley, "the enactment of the Sabbath was peculiarly strict and severe, so far as labour was concerned." "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt do *no manner of work*." And yet, he argues, when the disciples, going through the corn-fields on the Sabbath-day, plucked the ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands because they were hungry, which was undoubtedly a violation of the letter of the law, our Lord defended their act as a justifiable breach of the positive law of the Sabbath. "But," says Dr Halley, "what was the principle of the defence? Undoubtedly that, provided the benevolent and religious objects of the Sabbath were secured, the letter of the enactment was not worth the inconvenience of a brief cessation from food." All this we readily allow, so far as it is explicatory of the law of the *Christian* Sabbath, in respect to which a relaxation from the strictness of the *Mosaic* law of the Sabbath was permitted and introduced by the authority of Christ as "Lord of the Sabbath-day." The case of David eating the shew-bread, was clearly one of *necessity*—a sufficient reason, we consider, for

disregarding the letter of the positive law; for thus far we readily allow that a positive institution is not binding to the extent of a moral law. Hunger might justify the breach of the former, though of course not of the latter. Jesus reminds the Pharisees that there were cases, even under the Mosaic dispensation, in which positive law might be set aside, viz., cases of necessity; but without signifying that there was any actual necessity for what his disciples did (for the circumstances of the case do not imply that they were driven to this act by absolute starvation), he asserts that it is his prerogative to relax the law of the Sabbath still further, and on *that ground* he vindicates their act of plucking the ears of corn. He was greater than the temple, and could alter all its services, and all its laws, if so he pleased: he was "Lord of the Sabbath," and was fully authorized, therefore, to prescribe in what way it should be kept. Under the Jewish dispensation, it would have been a sin to have eaten the shew-bread, had it not been a case of urgent necessity; and so, for the priests to have profaned the temple by slaying the animals for sacrifice would have been a sin, but for necessity; but to have plucked ears of corn, and rubbed them in the hand, *without absolute necessity*, would, according to the law of the *Jewish* Sabbath, have been a sin admitting of no excuse. Jesus, however, was introducing another dispensation. He asserts his authority over the Sabbath, and we perfectly agree with Dr Halley in his appropriate language, that "the law of

the Sabbath is *now* obligatory in the generosity of its spirit, rather than in the severity of its letter; but we are not yet brought to see that "this is the true construction of *every* positive institution." It were strange to argue, because our Lord has taught us that the Christian Sabbath is to be kept on a different principle from the Jewish, that, therefore, we are at liberty to change his own positive laws and institutions. We can by no means see the way clear to this conclusion.

But what shall we say concerning those works of mercy, which are also pleaded as exceptions to the literal observance of the law of the Sabbath? It was allowable, notwithstanding the rigour of the law of the Jewish Sabbath, to pull an ox or an ass out of a pit on the Sabbath-day; and I must admit that the moral of our Lord's appeal, "Doth he take care of oxen, or saith he not this for our sakes?" is, that works of mercy were to be done on the Sabbath-day, rather than adhere to the strict letter of the law, which, in some cases, might take away the liberty even of doing good. Our Lord, we must candidly allow, *does* teach, that a work of mercy may supersede the rigorous precision of a positive law. I cannot but admit that the proverbial form of expression, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," leads us to this principle. But then comes the question, How is this principle to be applied? How far are we to carry it out? By what rule are we to judge, in particular cases,

whether the letter of a positive law is to be obeyed, or whether it is to be overruled by mercy? Here is the gist of the whole matter. Taking *too much* licence, it is impossible to say to what lengths we might be led. The plea of mercy, for instance, as it respects this very law of the Sabbath, might prove far too convenient for lazy and lukewarm professors. What endless reasons might be assigned, on the score of mercy, for neglecting the public duties of the day! Even good men might, on this principle, practise much self-deception, justifying a frequent misappropriation, even to a great extent, of the hallowed Sabbath hours. Who, then, is to decide what are the claims of mercy, or when they are so urgent as to rise in importance above the plain letter of the positive institution? The latter, surely, ought to be guarded, and certainly its claims ought not to be set aside for light reasons. *If something is due to mercy, something is also due to law.* As for deciding upon the respective claims of each, it would require a special illumination (which we do not profess to have) to do it, and, therefore, we can only regard this matter as one, concerning which it is the duty of every one to form a conscientious judgment for himself. As it regards the law of baptism, we take the command of Christ to be explicit, viz., that baptism is to be performed by immersion, or, at least, by complete superfusion; but, supposing this to be universally acknowledged, it is not for us to say that those who practise pouring or sprinkling,

on the principle that Christ requires mercy and not sacrifice, are not justified, in their own conscience, in thus far deviating from the plain letter of the law. This is a question upon which we have no sufficient data to argue—on which we have no authority to decide; and which, therefore, we leave amongst other cases of conscience, and say “Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

There is one other argument of Dr Halley’s which we must just glance at before we conclude. He says, that the institution of the Sabbath was antecedent to Moses, being enjoined by the fathers; that the law which requires us to keep the seventh day has never been repealed; and that, nevertheless, we keep, instead of that, the first day of the week, for which we have no commandment anywhere in the New Testament. He thinks we do right in observing the first day of the week, after the example of the apostles and disciples, though not having any law for so doing, and though the seventh day, as a positive institution, has never been repealed. Agreeing with the Doctor in this opinion, we yet do not see how it helps his cause, as it respects baptism. For though, in this case, we set aside the original law of the Sabbath as instituted from the creation, the fact of our having the example of the apostles as our authority for this, which cannot be pleaded for any change in the mode of baptism, makes all the difference between the two cases. Surely there is no argument in saying, because apostolic

authority changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first, therefore, we may make any other change, at our discretion, in any other positive institution. This argument clearly proves too much, and therefore is of no value. Let it be proved that the apostles baptized by sprinkling, though the terms of the institution enjoin immersion, and we admit a valid case is made out. We would, in such a case, follow their example without hesitation, though, in doing that, we might, like them, violate and act contrary to the plain letter of the law.

But are we, after all, right in speaking of the original Sabbath as a positive institution? Where are the terms of its institution to be found? We read, indeed, that after the works of creation were completed, God rested on the seventh day, and that he blessed that day and hallowed it. But he did not say to Adam, Thou shalt keep this *seventh* day as a Sabbath, and this only, and it shall be so kept for ever; and, therefore, though the early Christians kept the first day instead of the seventh, they broke no positive law in doing so. We admit that the consecration of the seventh day was virtually enjoined from the creation; but as no formal command was given to keep holy that day, of course there was nothing that needed to be formally repealed. But the practice of the apostles and first disciples was a virtual abrogation of the seventh-day Sabbath, and a virtual substitution of the first in the place of it. This is all the authority

that the nature of the case required for the change which originated, and which we consider as obligatory upon us as if enjoined by express positive precept. But it is quite impossible to argue from this to baptism, and it certainly cannot be appealed to for establishing, as a general principle, that a positive institution may be superseded and set aside altogether, and that something else, as we may deem fit or desirable, may be put into its place. To what lengths such a licentious principle might lead, it is impossible to predict.

I have now noticed the chief of Dr Halley's arguments on the mode of baptism, and I think I have done so with perfect impartiality. In bringing the whole of our discussion to an end, it is my fervent hope, and my earnest prayer, that the agitation of these questions may have the effect of teaching us all to exercise a candid and charitable spirit towards each other, and may tend to draw all nearer together by the bonds of fraternal and divine love. That we all shall be brought to a coincidence of opinion upon the subject of baptism, is too much to expect. It promises, as long as the world stands, to be an open question. We confess to entertaining strong opinions about it ourselves. We think the *tendency* of Pædobaptism is to irreligion and infidelity, and, did not the better principles of many of its advocates supply a powerful counteractive, the consequences would, we believe, ere now, have been of a very serious na-

ture. It is a matter of congratulation and thankfulness, however, that, while differing in respect to an external rite, the generality of Baptists and Pædobaptists hold in common the great essential truths and principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that, therefore, we are essentially one. Let nothing separate us from each other. Let there be no strife between us; or let us only strive to outdo each other in Christian activity and usefulness. Let there be no envy or jealousy; but rather, in the generous and magnanimous spirit of our religion, let us rejoice in each other's prosperity, honour each other's motives, and co-operate with each other in all good works, as being all interested in a common cause—having one Lord and one faith, if not one baptism. But how strange that we cannot fairly complete the quotation—that, through our misunderstandings, this third particular, which could be affirmed concerning Christians in the time of the apostles, as well as the other two, cannot be uttered in application to them now! However, this point, in which we are not all one, is just that which is least important. It is a non-essential; whereas the others, in which, happily, we agree, are essentials. Let our minor differences, then, be forgotten, and our denominational peculiarities be absorbed in that common Christianity where all inferior distinctions are lost sight of, and faith and love, as the prominent features of the Christian character, present themselves to the view in all their

glory, and beauty, and perfection. “For ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female;” and we will add, in full view of the preceding verse, respecting *all* who have truly put on Christ—“There is neither Pædo-baptist nor Anti-pædo-baptist, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

THE END.



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ERRATA.

Page 32, supply pp. 83, 84, at the note.

Page 54, line 10, for *αὐοῦς* read *αὐτοῦς*.

Page 55, line 28, for *or* read *for*.

Page 104, at the note, read *Stovel* for *Stowel*.

Page 181, line 4, for *υγιακον* read *χυγιακόν*.

Other less errors of the press, the reader will easily correct in the perusal.

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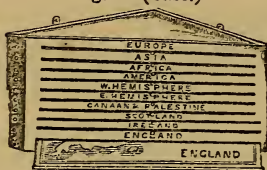
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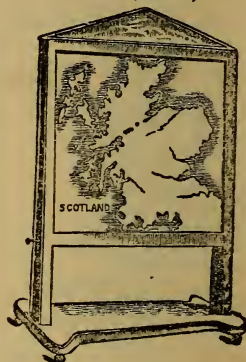
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